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CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

BY THE
REV. HENRY BIRCH.

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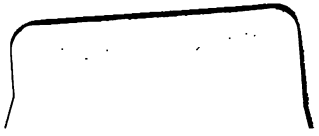

A BOOK FOR THE TIMES.

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS:

OR,

THE EVILS RESULTING FROM THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE.

BY THE

REV. HENRY BIRCH,

Author of "The Great Exhibition Spiritualised," "Christianity at One View," etc.

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CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

It will be admitted by every candid and reflecting man, that the subject of this humble and unpretending treatise is one of great practical importance. Moreover, it is beginning to engage the attention of all classes of the community. Both churchmen and dissenters are beginning to feel that they have a deep and personal interest in it. In a very short time it must engage the serious attention of the Legislature; and it will continue to agitate the public mind, more and more, until it be finally and permanently settled. On this account it seems most desirable that a succession of publications, calculated to assist men in forming a correct and enlightened judgment, should be brought before them. How far the present

one may be adapted for that purpose, the reader must determine for himself.

It is the exclusive design of this work to treat upon Church Establishments, *as such;* and to view them in their several bearings and connections. The question is not as to what particular *form* they should assume; whether they should be Episcopalian or Presbyterian, whether the prayers they offer should be written or extempore. But the grand point now to be considered is this—Are National Church Establishments right and necessary under *any form?* In other words, Is it the business of civil rulers to legislate in matters of religion? Is it their duty to set up a particular creed for the nation —to provide religious instructors for the people—and to meet the expenses attendant thereon by legislative enactments? This is the grand question now to be solved. The writer of these pages firmly and explicitly maintains that it is *not* their duty to do these things; that they are altogether out of their province when they meddle with them: and if he cannot clearly and satisfactorily establish this position, he will feel greatly obliged to any one who may be able to prove the contrary.

Should any person, or persons, take upon

them to send forth a reply to this work (and it is very probable they will), let them not spend their time and strength, and try the patience of their readers, by writing on secondary and incidental matters. Let them show us, if they can, by plain, logical, convincing argument, that a National Church Establishment is really necessary, just, and scriptural. This is what they have to aim at; and anything they may advance, which does not bear immediately upon this question, will be thoroughly irrelevant; it could answer no practical purpose, it could do no credit to the authors, and it could afford no help to the readers in judging of the important question discussed in these pages.

It is more than probable that this little treatise will fall into the hands of three classes of persons; that is, three classes of persons in relation to State Establishments of religion—those who are *opposed* to them, those who are *indifferent* about them, and those who are *favourable*. With respect to the first of these, no doubt they will heartily accord with the sentiments and principles here advanced; with regard to the second class, it is to be hoped that the reading of such publications as this will eventually *remove* that indifference, and

bring them to take an interest in a subject so closely connected with their own welfare and the well-being of society at large; then, with regard to the third class, those who are favourable, a few words of earnest remonstrance to *them* may not be without some good effect.

That you should be attached, and even *warmly* attached, to a Church Establishment is not a matter of any surprise. Without supposing that you are *officially* connected with it, and so enjoying a portion of its revenues, there are other things which will account for the strong leaning you feel toward such an institution. In all probability, you have been cradled in the system; and we all know the strength of educational prejudices. Then, again, we all have a strong innate reverence for what our fathers and forefathers believed, and said, and did before us; and, to a certain extent, this may be right. In addition to these things, since you arrived at manhood, you have read and heard so much in *praise* of the Establishment system, that you could never think of it in any other light than as the very perfection of human wisdom, and as being essentially necessary to the dignity and prosperity of a great nation.

Well, now, without supposing that you have been mistaken in this matter, be determined, for once at least, calmly and candidly to consider what may be said on the other side. You cannot be competent to pronounce an impartial judgment till you have; no more than a judge could pronounce an impartial verdict until he had heard the evidence on both sides of the case before him. Take into account that many of the wisest and best of men which this world ever knew, have entertained opinions on this subject contrary to your own; and that not a few of them have made *great sacrifices*, rather than adhere to a system which they could not conscientiously approve. Ponder deliberately the arguments here adduced; try to weigh them in a just balance; and if they be not strong enough to convince you that a Church Establishment is not the best way in the world for promoting the cause of Christianity, they can hardly fail to show you that dissenters have something like a reason to give for their nonconformity; and that they are entitled to your respect for following out their honest and sober convictions.

While many of the statements here advanced would apply to Church Establishments *in general*,

yet, as a whole, they are more especially intended to apply to the Church, "as by law established," in this country. And let it be strictly kept in mind that all such institutions, being national, are open to fair and legitimate criticism. The Church Establishment of this land was set up professedly for the religious instruction and benefit of the nation; and it is still sanctioned and supported by the British Government, ostensibly for the same object. This being the case, it is a fair question for British subjects to consider, whether the interests of religion would not be *better* promoted by being left entirely in their own hands, and Government support and control be altogether withdrawn. It is the special design of this work to show that State connections are only a *fetter* and a *clog;* and that when the golden chain that now binds the Church and State together, shall be dissolved, that Church herself, once settled on a pure and scriptural basis, and supported by the free-will offerings of her own members, will be far more efficient for all spiritual purposes; and, working harmoniously with other branches of the one Universal Church, will become a great and lasting blessing, not only to this nation, but to the world at large.

Let churchmen seriously ponder the fact, that the great question discussed in these pages, more deeply concerns *them* than any other portion of the religious community. They are the party to be most benefited by a *separation* of Church and State. They don't think so now, they cannot see it in that light; though some of them are beginning to suspect it may be true. But dissenters *know* it is true; and that is the reason why they so frequently urge it on their attention. If churchmen could once be brought to question their own infallibility on this subject; if they could be brought to say within themselves, "Well, it's possible we may be wrong in our judgment on this matter—we'll give the subject a thorough and candid investigation;" how would such a state of mind tend to open their eyes, and prepare them to weigh, in an impartial balance, the various arguments which, from time to time, are brought before them. One thing, however, is tolerably certain; viz., that facts, which are almost daily occurring and revealing the evils of the Church and State system, will *compel* them, ere long, to give the subject that calm and serious consideration which its vast importance so imperatively demands.

Let not the friends of the Establishment imagine that we enter on the discussion of this subject because we have any special love for controversy; much less to show anything like a spirit of hostility toward the persons comprising the Episcopal Church. We utterly repudiate everything of the kind. We have no feelings of hostility against their persons whatever; the very reverse of that: it is against *the system* with which they are identified, that we enter our solemn protest. After the most careful, candid, and impartial consideration, we have the deepest convictions that the union of Christianity with the State is an evil of *portentous magnitude!* Having these convictions, we feel that it is our bounden duty honestly and fearlessly to state them. If they fail to convince those who hold opinions contrary to our own, that the system they have espoused is wrong, and injurious to the cause it professes to serve, we cannot help it. We shall have done what we could. And, at all events, we feel assured that the reading of works like this, and especially by the younger members of our congregations, cannot fail to establish and confirm *them* in the maintenance of those principles which we believe to be inseparably connected

with the best interests of religion, both at home and abroad.

Happy will be the day for the Church of Christ, and most advantageous to the world at large, when these controversies about "Church and State" shall have passed away; when love and concord shall prevail among all parties; and when the only contention shall be —which shall do the most to spread the cause of our most blessed Redeemer to the ends of the earth.

In concluding this first chapter, the writer begs leave to say that he has no party interests to serve by this production; that he has endeavoured to present his thoughts before the reader in the most calm and dispassionate manner; and that all he now asks from the public is—a fair, candid, and impartial hearing. Should this plain and unpretending treatise be a means of placing the whole subject before them in a clear and intelligible manner, and thereby, of assisting them to form a sound and correct judgment, he will very sincerely rejoice, and most heartily render to the Giver of all good all the praise and the glory.

It is but simple justice to the author of these pages just to state, that the bulk of this work

was written five or six years ago. If the reader will keep this fact in mind, and compare it with the events that are transpiring around him, it will enable him to see how far the author was *right* in his anticipations.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLAND INIMICAL TO THE GRAND DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT is Christianity? It is a revelation from God; the completion of a system partially revealed under a former dispensation. It rests on the most indubitable authority. The divine origin of Christianity can be established by the most satisfactory and palpable evidence. It can be proved by the following things in particular: By the fufilment of prophecy; the working of miracles; the sublimity of its doctrines; the purity of its precepts; the perfect harmony and variety of its statements; the peculiar simplicity and dignity of its style; the adaptation of its provisions to the moral wants of the world; its marvellous preservation through so many conflicting ages; and by its moral influence on the characters of men, in every nation under heaven, and in every condition of life.

And what is the grand end and purpose of Christianity? It is to glorify the moral perfections of God, in the present and eternal salvation of men. His own glory must be the supreme end of all His works. We cannot conceive of a higher end; and everything in the universe is made subservient to that. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

The following perfections of Jehovah are gloriously harmonized and displayed in man's redemption, through the blood of the Cross: His wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth. In our salvation, through the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, we see justice and mercy meeting together; righteousness and peace embracing each other. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses." The apostle explains this more fully afterward, by saying, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." In these two passages, from Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, we have a beautiful description of God's gracious plan of saving sinners.

The redemption of man, procured by the suf-

ferings and death of the incarnate Saviour, especially includes the following things: His deliverance from the curse of the law; his restoration to the Divine image; freedom from slavish and tormenting fear; joy and peace in believing; supplies of strengthening grace for the duties and trials of life; and a bright crown of unfading glory beyond the grave. Those who are the happy partakers of these rich and precious blessings, will always be found walking in the truth, giving diligence to make their calling and election sure; living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

We now come to an important inquiry, the answer to which will soon bring us to the main point of this chapter. The question is this,—How is the grand design of Jehovah, in relation to the gospel, carried out? In other words, By what means, or agency, are men brought into a state of salvation, and thus prepared for the enjoyment of eternal glory? Ordinarily there is a twofold agency employed: the instrumentality of man, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps it is so in *all* cases; but in some instances the agency of man cannot be traced out. Men are converted to the faith

of the gospel apparently without any human effort at all; though even in these cases, I am inclined to think, human agency had been employed in sowing the seed at some former period. As to the ordinary way in which men are brought to a saving knowledge of God, we understand that very well. The gospel is first preached to them in its fulness and freeness, and then it is applied to their hearts and consciences by the direct influence of the Eternal Spirit. This is the doctrine Paul taught the Thessalonian Church, when he said, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in the power of the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." In all cases of real conversion, this Divine agency has been employed. No human instrumentality *alone* can turn sinners to God. No logical reasoning, no strains of eloquence, no pathetic appeals: none of these things alone will do. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water; but it is God that giveth the increase." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, when made effectual to that end by His own sovereign and gracious influence.

These remarks bring us to another important question; viz., What sort of men does God em-

ploy to proclaim His gospel, and as instruments of bringing sinners to the knowledge of the truth? I think we may best answer this question by asking another: What sort of men were Paul and Peter, James and John? Every thoughtful reader of the New Testament knows, for the most part, what they were. He knows they were enlightened, regenerated, godly men; men of self-denial, zeal, and devotion; men filled with compassion for the souls of their fellow-creatures, and actuated in all they did by a supreme regard to the glory of God. Such were the men employed in the first instance to preach the gospel to a perishing world; and such, as to their general character, have been the men He has employed ever since: not, of course, possessing their supernatural gifts and endowments; but men having the same religious experience, preaching the same essential doctrines, and aiming at the same grand objects —the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. Such men, wherever found, are the only true and genuine "successors of the Apostles," called and sent by the Head of the Church Himself, and qualified for the work He has given them to do.

The office of the Christian ministry is the

most solemn and responsible that any man can fill; and, consequently, it must have men duly qualified for its administration. It is universally admitted that, in the common affairs of daily life, men must have the requisite qualifications for the several stations they are destined to occupy; whether as physicians, lawyers, counsellors, judges, members of Parliament, or anything else. On the same principle, does not every individual of ordinary capacity perceive, that if persons require certain qualifications for the common affairs of daily life, much more must they require them for the most solemn of all engagements—the preaching of the everlasting gospel, attending the sick and the dying, and watching over the interests of immortal souls? Surely for such a work men ought to be duly qualified; and as this is a point of great practical consequence, we beg to call the reader's special attention to it.

We shall now briefly state what we consider are the necessary *qualifications* for the work of the ministry, and what are the proper *motives* for entering upon it.

The first qualification, as already intimated, is real, *sterling piety*. A minister of the gospel

must be the subject of personal, experimental godliness. This is a *sine qua non*, absolutely indispensable; nothing can be a substitute for it. No classical attainments, no mathematical skill, no scientific researches, no logical discrimination, no powers of eloquence,—not any or all of these together can qualify a man for the Christian ministry, without genuine personal religion. These things will help him, no doubt, to discharge his duties more efficiently; but they will not do as a substitute for the other. The duties of a minister of the gospel, both in the pulpit and the sick chamber, imperatively demand that he should feel the power, the sweetness, the preciousness of the gospel in his own soul. Without this he is talking of what he does not understand; nay, more, he is acting the part of a consummate hypocrite in every official engagement; pretending to be concerned for the interests of religion, when, in point of fact, he cares nothing about them.

There are two other qualifications necessary for a Christian teacher, which can only be just glanced at. The first of these is, a general acquaintance with the fundamental principles of Christianity—doctrinal, experimental, and

practical. Something like a distinct view of the several parts; and such a comprehensive grasp of the whole as will enable a man to see the connection of one part with another; and that Christianity constitutes one perfect, sublime, and harmonious system. The other qualification referred to is, an ability to *explain* these things in a style of language at once convincing and impressive; to present them in so clear and perspicuous a manner, that the people may be both interested and edified.

With respect to the *motives* that should induce a man to undertake this office, a very few words may suffice. I think it may be safely affirmed that when a man enters upon the work with the qualifications here specified, he will be sure to engage in it with right motives. A man of sterling piety will be sure to engage in this work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and no consideration less than this can justify a man in entering upon it at all. If a man take this office upon himself for a respectable status in society, for literary gratifications, for worldly emoluments, for any selfish purposes whatever; such a man, to whatever church or community he may belong, I believe was never called of God to the Chris-

tian ministry. He is serving *himself*, he is not serving God. He is seeking his own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. He is a mere hireling, and not a true shepherd. He may style himself, or be styled by others, "Reverend," or "Right Reverend," or anything else which the usages of society may sanction; but high-sounding names and titles do not alter a man's character in the sight of Him who is shortly to be our Judge. The highest title any man can wear, and the highest honour he can possess, is to be *a servant of Christ;* but that title and that honour belong not to the man who has entered the ministry to serve his own carnal and selfish purposes. The day is fast coming when every man's character and motives will be fully revealed; and on that day the Chief Shepherd will acknowledge none as His ministers and servants but those who in heart and life have been consecrated to His glory, and who have laboured, by a faithful exhibition of the truth, to turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.

We must now endeavour to show the reader in what particular way the Church Establishment of this country "is inimical to the grand

design of Christianity." We think it is so, especially, by the constant introduction of improper men into the ministerial office. We do not say that *all* so introduced are improper men; God forbid it should be so. But it is *a notorious fact*, that by means of this Establishment great numbers are brought into the ministry who are destitute of the qualifications and motives of which we have been speaking; and they often make it manifest to those who are capable of judging of these matters, that such is really the case.

Do not considerable numbers, by their constant pursuit of worldly pleasures and amusements, sufficiently demonstrate that they are utter strangers to the converting grace of God, and to all the realities of the spiritual life; and therefore must be *disqualified* for the sacred office? Do not others, again, show how unqualified they are for the work of the pulpit, by constantly *borrowing* from the labours of other men that which their own heads and hearts ought to supply? Do not others show their entire unfitness to preach the gospel, by presenting to the people almost anything and everything *but* the gospel? Is not this class of men perpetually inculcating a few moral

duties and ceremonial observances, instead of insisting on a thorough change of heart, a living faith in Christ, and the consecration of the whole soul to God?

Thus, while some show the want of proper qualifications for this work, others, again, show the want of proper *motives*. Do not many, by their daily deportment, clearly demonstrate that they have taken upon themselves the most sacred office for the secular advantages it may afford them, and not for the good of souls? Do not some manifest this by spending a large portion of their time away from their flocks, and by doing as little as they possibly can when they are with them? When called upon to visit the sick and the dying, is not that important duty often discharged in the most flippant and hasty manner? Then, again, do not others show their want of proper motives for this work by the worldliness and secularity of their spirit? Are not tithes and glebes, church dues and livings, land and cattle, law and politics, with a host of worldly matters—are not these the everlasting themes of their conversation, to the exclusion of those sacred subjects which ought to engage their supreme attention and regard? If the walls of their

habitations could re-echo these things, what a tale would they tell to the world! Yes, indeed, in a variety of ways do they make it palpably clear and certain, that the *emoluments* of the office, and not the office *itself*, are what they are chiefly concerned about.

I go on to ask, Does not the Church Establishment of this country present the strongest possible *inducements* for worldly men to seek admission into the ministry for their own secular advantage? I say it *does;* and shall now endeavour to prove it. The chief inducements are of three kinds: The rich benefices, the system of patronage, and the easy manner in which the duties of the clerical office may be discharged.

In the first place, the number and variety of rich livings the Church has to bestow, are, undoubtedly, a very strong inducement to many to seek admission into the pulpit for purposes of worldly gain. Were these livings a vast deal less than they now are, and could only *one* be possessed by the same individual, they would have far less attractions to *carnal* men than they now possess, and especially to the upper classes of society. The enormously rich benefices possessed by the bishops and other ecclesiastics, appear to me a burlesque upon

Christianity. What can the majority of mankind think that men aspire to these offices for, but just that they may roll in wealth and luxury? Paul could say, with a clear conscience, "We seek not yours, but you." If these men were to tell the world that they fill these offices "for the love of souls, and not for gain," it would laugh them to scorn.

Then look at the second inducement, Patronage: Does not the present system of patronage most notoriously encourage improper men to seek admission into the Church for worldly honour and advantage? Whether the patrons be private individuals, or colleges, or bishops, or cabinet ministers, do not they bestow their favours, for the most part, either to promote party politics or to secure good berths for their friends and connections? Before they appoint a person to a living, do they stop diligently to inquire if he be a *godly* man, and if he possess other requisite qualifications for the office? I believe they do *not.* Is it not a well-known fact that parents frequently destine their sons for the Church from their very birth, irrespective of their future character and talents, just because they have some "friend at Court" who, by-and-by, will lift them into a snug and comfortable

situation of some five hundred or, it may be, a thousand a year? What multitudes of men, destitute of all proper qualifications, have been induced to seek admission into the ministry for purposes of worldly gain by this unscriptural mode! This patronage system is constantly making merchandise of souls, by committing the spiritual interests of whole parishes to the care of men whose *only care* is to serve and please themselves.

I go on to observe, That the Church Establishment of this country holds out a *third* inducement for men to enter the ministry for their own temporal advantage, and that is, the easy manner in which the duties of the office may be discharged. The constant habit of *reading* both prayers and sermons has, no doubt, induced many to enter the ministry who would never have thought of such a thing had other modes been adopted; but they knew that the duties of the office could be so easily discharged, that their only solicitude was how to get in.

Let us first offer a remark or two about the reading of *prayers*. I say not a word about the prayers themselves—it is readily admitted that they are good; nor do I take upon me to condemn the use of *all forms* of prayer—that

would be presumptuous. Forms are used, to some extent, in some dissenting places of worship; and where both minister and people find their devotions assisted by them, by all means let them have them. What I protest against is, the *exclusive* use of written prayers, as is generally the case in the Church of England. I think that in all cases *extempore* prayer should be blended with the other, and that it will be for the real edification of the people. But when, on the other hand, the devotional parts of the service are strictly confined to the letter of the book, the practice has a direct tendency to draw improper men into the ministry,—men who are totally destitute of the *spirit* of prayer, and consequently wholly unfit for the sacred office to which they have aspired.

Similar remarks may be made with respect to the reading of *sermons*. If men were obliged to *preach* their sermons, instead of reading them, the probability is, that many who rush into the ministry, for the sake of its emoluments, would seriously hesitate to take such a step. I know it may be said, "There are some dissenters who read." Granted; but they are the exceptions, not the rule; and I would venture to predict that, should the practice ever become general, the

power of the dissenting ministry will be greatly deteriorated. This habit of reading in the Establishment has done everything to encourage men to enter the ministry, who had neither a love for the work nor ability for its performance. It has often been a cloak for their incompetence by inducing them to read the productions of other men. They knew they could do all this before they entered the sacred desk; they knew that if they had not ability to make suitable preparation for the pulpit themselves, the work of other men's minds would be available for their use. It is quite clear, then, that this practice of reading sermons has done much to encourage men to undertake an office, the duties of which they were incompetent to discharge.

Now let us give a summary of what is contained in several preceding pages. We have been endeavouring to prove that the Church Establishment of this country is unfavourable to the grand design of Christianity: that design is to bring sinners to God; God employs instruments to proclaim His gospel, in order to carry out this design; the men He employs are persons duly qualified for the work,—men pos-

sessing both gifts and grace, knowing the truth experimentally, and feeling anxious for the salvation of others. These are the kind of men He employs; and no others can *efficiently* discharge the duties of the Christian pastor. But, with all solemnity, I ask, Is the Church Establishment the *best* means of *securing* such men? I trow not. On the contrary, Is it not notorious for introducing men of the very opposite description? Does it not hold out strong inducements to carnal men to enter the ministry for their own secular advantage? And is it not a fact, established beyond all disputation, that great numbers of worldly-minded, unqualified men are drawn into the ministry by these temptations? Therefore, I contend that the Church Establishment of England is inimical to the grand design of Christianity. If any man thinks the logic is not sound, we shall feel obliged to him to show in what its unsoundness consists.

And is it any wonder that so many should *yield* to these temptations? Is it any wonder that worldly men should seek to enter the ministry, when they see how *easily* its duties can be performed, and what lucrative *advantages* may possibly arise from it? None at all. They

want a living—a competency, and they must do something to obtain it; the Establishment presents its attractions, and they yield to them. They resolve upon the profession of the ministry as a worldly speculation, and the pulpit is made a mere stepping-stone to wealth and influence, and all the social advantages with which it may happen to be associated.

No doubt such a course of conduct is highly *offensive* in the sight of God. It is an act of the grossest hypocrisy, and the most daring impiety. It is a species of iniquity, at which the very powers of darkness may stand aghast; and for this reason,—because it is wickedness committed under the mask of religion! For a man to swear "that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel," and to go to the altar of God under the pretence of seeking to advance His glory, and of doing good to immortal souls, when, at the same time, he knows he is only seeking his own carnal, selfish, worldly, interests; this must be the highest possible *affront* to the Majesty of heaven.

And which do we blame most, the men who *do* these things, or the system that tempts and allures them? Oh, the system, to be sure; *the Church and State system.* It is this unhallowed

union of Church and State that has drawn more unconverted men into the ministry, than all things else beside. And it is in this way that the ministry has become so degraded in the eyes of the world. I say *degraded;* for I know it is so. Ask the adult population of England this question: "What do you think men go into the ministry for? is it to save souls, or to get money?" I fear two-thirds of them would say, "Oh, to get money, to be sure." This is the impression, the general impression, on the public mind. And what has produced this impression? The Establishment system; no doubt about that; and it will be a generation after that system shall have passed away, before the public generally will be brought to believe and acknowledge, that men may and *do* go into the ministry for a nobler purpose than that of getting money; the nobler purpose of preaching a crucified Saviour, and, thereby, of making sinners wise unto salvation.

The Church and State system is a fine thing in theory, and, like many other things, looks well at a *distance.* But if we come to examine its secret workings and its practical effects, how different is the impression produced! It is a fine thing to talk about a "Paternal

Government making a provision for the spiritual necessities of the people." It sounds like a very benevolent scheme to hear men talk about "dividing the land into parishes, and placing a man in every parish, as its spiritual overseer and guide." All this looks very fair at first sight, and if we did not know to the contrary, we might conclude that such a system must be productive of the most happy and blessed results. But, let it be remembered, if the man so placed be not the *right* man; if he possess not the requisite qualifications for a religious teacher, and be not thoroughly consecrated to his work; if a regard for his own *secular interests*, and not the welfare of souls, has induced him to take the spiritual charge of that parish; then, I say, the parish would have been *unspeakably better* without such provision altogether. For, in that case, the people would have sought out religious teachers for themselves, or God would have sent them pastors after His own heart—men who would have fed them with the bread of life, and watched over their souls as those that must give an account.

In judging of the *evils* done to a neighbourhood by an unsuitable person being placed over

it, there are two things in particular to be considered. In the first place, false doctrine, more or less, will be sure to be propagated. It is almost a certainty that the gospel, in its purity and simplicity, will not be proclaimed. Possibly he may now and then read a good gospel sermon, which some one has prepared for him. But even then there will be no *feelings in his heart* corresponding with the sentiments he utters; consequently the whole affair will be likely to fall dead and flat upon the people. The probability is, that the essential principles of the gospel will constitute a very small part of his discourses. The doctrine of self-righteousness, so agreeable to human nature, will be more frequently advocated. Instead of the people being directed to renounce all confidence in themselves, and to rest wholly on a crucified Saviour for their present and eternal salvation, they will be taught to depend on their own moral and religious performances, and in this way be led on blindfold to eternal perdition. "There is a way," says Solomon, "which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof is death." It is much to be feared multitudes are led in this false way, by those who profess to preach the gospel, but who, at the same

time, are utter strangers to all the principles of experimental godliness.

The second evil to which I referred is as follows: It frequently happens that those who are disqualified for the pastoral office themselves, and quite indifferent about the souls of men, will throw every kind of stumbling-block in the way of others. If another visit the neighbourhood, and from the very best of motives, in order to show the people a more excellent way, and to stir up those who are living in their sins, to attend to their eternal interests, the man who *ought* to feel for them, and who is paid by the State that he may labour for their spiritual welfare, will oppose all such efforts to the utmost of his power. He will raise up a storm of persecution against the man who has presumed to teach and preach within the limits of his jurisdiction. He will hold up dissenters at large as a set of weak-headed fanatics, and their ministers as "unauthorised" and "uncalled" to preach the gospel. He will warn the people against the dangers of dissent, and the evil of schism. All this contemptible stuff and rubbish will he pour into their ears from Sabbath to Sabbath; thereby conveying to them the idea that if they

leave the Establishment, and listen to other teachers, their salvation will be endangered; but if they continue to cleave to the Church, their future happiness will be secure. These are some of the soul-deluding doctrines that are proclaimed in many of our parochial pulpits to this very day, and I believe will be proclaimed so long as Church and State are linked together. With such facts glaring before our eyes, may we not most truly affirm that "the Church Establishment of England is inimical to the grand design of Christianity?"

Perhaps some of my readers may be ready to say, "Have we not a goodly number of zealous, godly men in the Church, who are really preaching the gospel, and seeking the salvation of the souls committed to their charge? Surely you had forgotten these." No, I had not forgotten them, and shall have more to say about them by-and-by. The dissenters of this kingdom rejoice that you have such a goodly number of faithful and devoted men among you; and trust that number is constantly augmenting. But this does not alter the fact that you have many of an opposite description, men who have no experimental acquaintance with

the gospel, and, for that reason, cannot preach it to others. And so long as the present system lasts, you will always be likely to have many such; for it is the system that draws them in. Nor is this all. The system not only *draws* them in, but it *keeps* them in; and this, I apprehend, is one of its *worst* features. It matters comparatively little either what they do, or what they leave undone. They may live a life of complete dissipation—attending races, theatres, balls, card parties, or anything else they like; they may proclaim in their pulpits almost any kind of doctrine they please; they may visit the people, or not visit them, just as they feel disposed; they may go in search of their own pleasures for months together, leaving their flocks in charge of those who may chance to care as little about them as they care themselves: all these things they may do, but their livings are in no way endangered. So long as they do not go beyond all the bounds of decency and common morality, there is no power on earth can touch them. Such is our loudly praised system of an Established Church! I solemnly ask the reflecting, godly men of England, Was there ever a system devised, unless it be downright Popery

itself, so monstrously irrational and absurd, and so calculated to defeat the gracious purposes for which Christianity was given to our lost and ruined world? This is the system so frequently and extravagantly applauded by the pulpit, the platform, and the press. How often do we hear it styled, "OUR EXCELLENT ESTABLISHMENT!" Yes, indeed, very excellent for providing the sons of the nobility and gentry with rich, comfortable livings, for doing very little work. In this sense, no doubt, it is the most excellent establishment in the world. And so long as she is willing to pour her riches into their lap, thus enabling them to live at ease, and fare sumptuously every day, it would be the climax of ingratitude on their part not to praise and extol her to the skies.

Before closing this chapter, I would address a few remarks especially to those who are strenuous advocates for a State religion. Suppose the Government of this country were to say, "We'll have a State provision of *lawyers* and *doctors;*" and imagine that they actually brought in a bill for this purpose, and carried it: a bill providing a certain number of each for each parish, according to the population;

and all, of course, to be paid from the taxation of the country. This being done, I simply ask, what would be the result? how long would such a system last? what portion of the community would be satisfied with it? would dissenters like it? We are quite sure they would not; would churchmen themselves approve of it? I trow not. Perhaps they would be the first to cry out against it, and call it a "*monstrous system*," a "*perfect absurdity*." Probably they would be the first to exclaim, "We don't want these State-paid lawyers and doctors; we have no confidence in them." I fancy I hear first one and then another saying, "I can't think why Government have taken into their heads to interfere in these matters; why can't they leave them to us? I'm sure I shan't employ these men; I shall have my own lawyer and doctor, and pay for them." A very noble independence, and much to be admired. But now I ask churchmen carefully to look at this matter. You won't have a State-paid official to manage your estates, or to attend you in your sickness; you won't have these State-paid functionaries to look after your bodies and your temporal interests; no, you'll have your own; but a State-paid official to look

after your souls and their *eternal* interests,—whether he be qualified for his office or not,—will satisfy you very well. If he only belong to the "*State Church*," that seems to be everything with you; you don't trouble your head about his *qualifications*. What marvellous inconsistency to be sure! Nothing but the most inveterate prejudices could lead men to act in a manner so palpably absurd.

Dissenters act on the very reverse principle. They act on the same principle in *spiritual* things that churchmen would in *temporal*. They say, by their actions, "We'll not have the State provision for our souls; we'll not have a pastor forced on us by some lordly patron; we know what a minister of religion ought to be too well for that. We'll choose and support our own, and then we know what we shall have; and while he feeds us, from week to week, with the pure bread and water of life, we shall feel it our duty and happiness to minister to his temporal comfort, and to encourage him in the great work God has given him to do." Now, to say nothing of Scripture on this point, do not reason and common sense plainly tell men that the long-condemned voluntary principle is far more likely to intro-

duce godly and efficient men into the ministry, and thereby to answer all the ends and purposes of Christianity, than the boasted patronage system of our National Establishment?

Let us reflect, for a moment or two, upon the peculiar and critical situation of a parish congregation that has recently lost its minister, especially if he happen to have been a faithful preacher of the gospel, and thoroughly devoted to his work. They want a successor; and a successor, of course, must be found. But by whom? by themselves? No; but by the patron of the living. Then have they no voice in the matter? None whatever. Can they not object, should one be sent they do not approve of? No; they have no more control over the business than if they lived in the West Indies. And is there any certainty that the patron, on whom the appointment solely depends, will look out for a suitable person to fill this vacancy? There is not the least certainty about it. The probability is that the appointment has been made years before, either to one of his own family connections, or to oblige some particular friend. The individual thus appointed, may be altogether unsuitable for the office. He may be a kind of fashionable man, fond of gay parties

and worldly amusements; or he may be a great stickler for outward forms and ceremonies, looking more to these than to the state of the heart; or he may be ignorant, to a fearful extent, of the distinguishing and fundamental principles of the gospel: and should it so happen that none of these things apply to him, still he may be a stranger to the regenerating and sanctifying grace of God, and if so, *thoroughly disqualified* for the duties he has undertaken to perform. But, whatever he may be, it makes no matter. Good, bad, or indifferent, the people must take him as he is; they have no alternative. They must have this man, and no other, if they remain in the Church at all. Well, then, so far as religion is concerned, is it possible to conceive of a people in a more *humiliating* and *degraded* condition? and that degradation they must sometimes *feel;* it can hardly be otherwise; but they want the courage to shake off the fetters, and set themselves free.

Such, courteous reader, is the Church and State system as it exists at the present time, and is daily practised before our eyes. Will it be believed, some fifty years hence, that in Britain, and in the middle of the nineteenth

century, a system, so repugnant both to reason and revelation, and so detrimental to the best interests of mankind, should have been advocated in parliaments, extolled from pulpits and platforms, and pleaded for in every possible way, as the very climax of human legislation, and as the grand *conservator* of religion in the land?

No doubt it is somewhat strange, and will excite the wonder of a future age, that a system so thoroughly unscriptural, and inimical to the grand design of Christianity, should have lasted so long. The profound ignorance of multitudes respecting religion altogether, and the total apathy of others, immersed in the cares and pleasures of this world, will go far to account for the fact.

Now, happily, a great change has passed over, and is passing over, the public mind. Men are beginning to see that civil governments are not to be trusted with the spiritual affairs of Christ's kingdom; and it is only necessary for this enlightenment to go on a few years longer, and then we shall have matters settled on a foundation that will secure the final triumphs of the gospel, and contribute, in no small measure, to the peace and prosperity of the world at large.

CHAPTER III.

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS OPPOSED TO THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF PROTESTANTISM.

PERHAPS the very *title* of this chapter may startle some of my readers. Perhaps they may be ready to exclaim, "Impossible! it cannot be that Church Establishments are opposed to the first principle of Protestantism! The writer must be bewildered, and carried away by some strange infatuation." Well, let us see. Possibly it may be shown he is not so bewildered as you imagine. If the sentiment advanced in this title cannot be substantiated by the very clearest logic,—if it cannot be demonstrated by the most invincible argument, he will ask no one to believe it.

In prosecuting this discussion, two questions require to be answered. First, What is the essential principle, or the very groundwork of a Church Establishment? It is this: That it is both the *right* and the *duty* of the State to

legislate on religious matters. The principle, when more fully defined, is as follows: That it is the duty of the State to ordain a religious creed and forms of worship, to provide places in which that worship may be conducted, to appoint men to officiate in those places, and, in some form or other, to make provision for their comfortable maintenance. This is what I understand by a Church Establishment, or a State provision for the religious instruction of the people.

Now for the second question, What is the first principle of Protestantism? It is the right of *private judgment* in all matters of a religious nature. This means, when more fully expressed, that it is the right and duty of every man to read the Scriptures for himself, to form his own religious creed, to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and to support that faith and worship he believes to be most in harmony with God's revealed will.

But are not these two principles directly opposed to each other? Are they not as contrary to each other as light and darkness, Christ and Belial? Must not the same argument that establishes the one necessarily overthrow the

other? And must it not be by a species of the profoundest sophistry that they can be made to *appear* to harmonise together? Let us try if we cannot make it perfectly clear, even to the humblest capacity, that these two principles are essentially and immutably opposed to each other.

The advocates of a State Church say, that "It is the duty of the State to provide a system of religious instruction for the people." Then, on the same principle, it must be the duty of the people to *submit* to the provisions the State has made for them. When the civil power legislates on *civil matters*, we know that it is the duty of men to submit, and we also know they *must* submit, or pay the penalty; and if it could be shown that it is the business of civil governments to legislate on religious affairs—that is, to ordain creeds, establish forms of worship, provide religious teachers, and so forth; I say, if it *could* be clearly demonstrated that it is the duty of the State to provide these things, then I think it would follow, as a logical consequence, that it was the duty of the people to adopt the creed and attend the worship and ministrations provided for them. But we object to the prin-

ciple of a State provision altogether, and believe it to be without any rational foundation. We believe it is *not* the duty of the State to provide these things, and for this very solid and substantial reason, because the right to judge and act in all religious matters is in every man's own bosom. This is the first principle of Protestantism, and it is diametrically opposed to all State interference whatever. If the right of thinking and acting in religious affairs be in a man's own breast, then it is not his duty to submit to anything the State may appoint for him: and if it be no man's duty to submit to a State provision, then I contend it is not the duty of the State to make such a provision at all. If you contend for the principle of a State religion, then you must give up the right of private judgment, and say that men ought to bow to the authority of the State; but if you contend for the right of private judgment, then you must give up the principle of a State religion. The two principles are eternally irreconcileable with each other. These remarks, I presume, will do something to show the reader that Church Establishments are opposed to the first principle of Protestantism.

Man is in no way responsible to his fellow-

man in religious things, but only to his MAKER. The Sovereign Ruler of the universe has given him a revelation of His will. He has given him a law—the law of the New Testament. That law is binding on his conscience, and no other; and he is responsible for his obedience to that law, or his rejection of it. But this responsibility to God, in all religious matters, exonerates him from all obedience to man. If it be my right and duty to take the Word of God as my sure and infallible guide,—to believe what I think His Word teaches, and to worship Him in that way which is most edifying to my own mind,—then I must, of necessity, set at nought all human legislation in what relates to my eternal interests, and boldly affirm that all such legislation is an assumption of the prerogatives of the Deity, and an invasion of the sacred rights of conscience.

For a man to contend that it is the duty of governments to set up a national religion, and at the same time admit that every man is at liberty to set up his own,—or, what is the same thing, to follow the dictates of his own mind, is, to my humble way of thinking, a most glaring and palpable absurdity; and, to

make men *support* religious systems from which they conscientiously dissent is the most *despicable tyranny* which the rulers of nations can practise on their subjects. It is doing violence both to their pockets and consciences at the same time; it is a species of injustice which all the sophistry in the world can never vindicate, and which no really enlightened country will much longer tolerate or endure.

I go on to observe, further, that the principle of a State religion is essentially *popish*. For what is the essence of Popery? Is it not human authority exercised in religious affairs? The Pope and the cardinals together—absurdly enough calling themselves "THE CHURCH"—presume to dogmatise and dictate to their fellow-men in all matters of a religious nature. They prescribe articles of faith, rites, ceremonies, saints'-days, fast-days, prayers and penances, and all the rest of it; and then, mark you, they have the audacity to tell men, that "they must believe and do as the Church commands, on pain of eternal damnation"! Now, it appears very clearly to me, that the principle of all National Church Establishments is precisely the same *thing*. In both cases, *it is human authority*

legislating in religious affairs. That is the principle and essence of Popery, and that is the principle and essence of every State Church in the world. It is man setting himself up in the temple of God, prescribing and dictating to his fellow-men, and trampling under foot all the sacred rights of conscience. "Hear the Church, believe and do what the Church says;" that is virtually and really the language of an Establishment. And what is that, but Popery over again, Popery under another name? And there are some Protestants, or Protestants *so called,* who have drank so deeply into the popish spirit, that they have thundered out their anathemas, like the popes at Rome, and threatened all the horrors of eternal perdition against those who disputed their authority, and who ventured to think and act for themselves. Thank God, all their curses and imprecations fall as harmless on our heads, as the falling of a leaf on the mountain top; and we care no more for their threatened anathemas, than we care for the roaring of the "bulls" from the "eternal city."

I now proceed to show that *religious persecutions,* of all kinds and degrees, have had their

origin in the Church and State system.* Civil rulers, backed and supported, as they have uniformly been in all ages, by a carnal and domineering priesthood, have not been satisfied with setting up religious systems, and compelling men to pay for them ; nor even with threatening men, in case of disobedience, with God's future wrath and displeasure. They have taken the sword of retribution into their own hands, and have inflicted ten thousand miseries upon their unoffending fellow-creatures, just because they would not submit to their authority in sacred things. Why is it that the page of history is so stained with the record of human suffering in connection with religion? Just because civil rulers have endeavoured to force the consciences of men by fines, imprisonments, flames, racks, and gibbets. These cruelties have been inflicted on men, just because they would not bow to the State religion. Why

* This subject is exhibited in a very clear and forcible manner in a work recently published, entitled "ENGLISH NONCONFORMITY." By the late Rev. Dr. VAUGHAN. This admirable treatise presents the reader with a beautiful and condensed *history of Christianity, from apostolic times down to the present period;* and is especially deserving the attention of all those who wish to make themselves familiar with the subject.

did the primitive Christians suffer such cruel persecutions, under the reign of Imperial Rome? and why did the Protestants of England, France, and other countries, suffer in like manner, under the dominant reign of Popery? and why have dissenters, in this and other lands, been subjected to cruelties, the very thought of which makes one's blood run cold? In the spirit of holy indignation we ask, Why were these atrocities committed on those meek and unoffending disciples of Jesus? Just because they were determined to carry out their own honest convictions, and would not bow to the State religion; the Church and State system was at the bottom of it all.

Let the reader observe, that all these parties wished to profess and teach those religious principles which they believed to be most in harmony with the revealed will of God; and because they *did* profess and teach them, and because those principles were opposed to the religion of the State, they were hated, reviled, persecuted, arraigned before magistrates, tried, and condemned. It mattered nothing how upright and honourable they were, as members of civil society. They might be the most virtuous of citizens, and the most loyal to the

Government in all secular affairs; but none of these things were of any consideration. They professed and taught a religion opposed to the religion of the *State;* that was their capital crime, "the head and front of their offending;" and for that they must be doomed to suffer "the utmost rigour of the law."

I think it must be perfectly clear, from what has now been advanced, that the union of Church and State was the root and origin of all kinds and degrees of religious persecution; consequently, the sufferings and blood of all the martyrs, in every age, are to be laid at the door of those who have been the advocates of the Church and State system. This is a very grave and serious indictment, we must admit; but, if the writer be not very much mistaken, it would puzzle the wisest heads in Europe to disprove it. Why, is it not perfectly clear to the most ordinary capacity, that, had there been no State religion, these enormities and cruelties could never have happened? Surely, then, these enormities and cruelties, which have sprung from the *union* of Church and State, ought to be sufficient to condemn the system in the mind of every candid and reflecting *man.*

Perhaps some apologists for Establishments would say, "We repudiate these cruel persecutions as much as you can; but we think it was owing to the *darkness* of the age that these cruelties were inflicted, and not so much to the system you condemn." No doubt that had something to do with it; but it was the system itself that was the primary *cause* of those sufferings. Had the age been darker than it was, but for the union of Church and State, those things could never have happened. Just suppose that there had been no connection between Church and State in this country for the last three hundred years; that all parties had been left to propagate Christianity in their own way, and all protected by the civil power: under these circumstances, how could persecution have happened? it would have been impossible. All would have dwelt under their own vine and fig tree, in peace and safety; none daring to make them afraid. The same remarks, of course, would apply to every age and country. Surely, then, it has now been made sufficiently plain, that the union of Church and State has been the direful and fruitful source of ten thousand woes and sufferings to our fallen and distracted world.

In this part of the subject it may be inquired, "Is not a Church Establishment perfectly compatible with civil and religious *liberty?* and do not the dissenters of this land enjoy that liberty at the present day?" In reply to these inquiries, it may be observed, The phrase "civil and religious liberty" has a very extensive signification. But we will try to find out how far a State Church is really compatible with these two things: no doubt it is compatible, or reconcilable, with both to a large extent. It may be compatible with *civil* liberty to the fullest degree,—I would not speak positively as to that matter; but I do not think a State Church is, or *can* be, compatible with full, perfect *religious* liberty. We will take a brief glance at both these points, which I trust may be satisfactory to the reader.

First, with regard to *civil* liberty, it may be said, The dissenters of this country now enjoy many *rights* and *privileges* they did not formerly possess; these privileges, for the most part, have been wrung from a reluctant legislature, but they were demanded by the people, again and again, as acts of simple justice, until they could no longer be withheld. It is but a few years since they were excluded from every

civil office of honour and distinction. Happily these disabilities, to a large extent, have been removed, and they now take their place on the magisterial bench, in the corporations, and in the senate of the land. No doubt, as time rolls on, and the public mind becomes more and more liberalized, the concessions already made will be followed by others, until there shall be perfect equality, regardless of all sectarian distinctions.

Now for a few remarks on the second point, *religious* liberty. The dissenters of this land enjoy this privilege to a high degree, and they are thankful to a gracious Providence that they live in times when the rights of conscience are so much respected. The nonconformists of this country possess full and perfect liberty to meet for worship and edification when and where they please, and they are *protected* by the strong arm of the land in so doing; it is at the peril of any man to interfere with them, or to molest them in any way whatever. This is religious liberty to a high degree; still, I would not say it was *perfect*,—so long as we have an Established Church, I do not think religious liberty *can* be perfect: an established Church is an *endowed* Church—a Church en-

dowed and supported by law; that is the meaning of the phrase, if I understand it at all. And whence do those endowments come, but from the nation at large? Must it not, then, be an act of injustice to take the property of the nation, and apply it to *one branch* of the professing Christian community?

In the commencement of this chapter, when describing what was meant by "the right of private judgment," I stated, "That it was the duty of every man to *support* that system of faith and worship which he believed to be most in harmony with the word of God." But, if it be his duty to support that system which he approves, can it be right to make him support a system he does *not* approve? Most assuredly not; it is an act of the grossest injustice. The Government which sets up a State Church compels the whole community to support it, therefore a State Church is a *standing injustice* to those who conscientiously dissent from it. All such compulsion is in direct *violation* of the *first principle of Protestantism.* Yes, I fearlessly affirm that every National Church Establishment in Europe is built upon a violation of that principle, therefore I venture to predict every such establishment is destined to fall.

Perhaps it will be said, "The Church, as by law established in this country, is mainly supported by *her own property*, and therefore can be no injustice to the community at large." I, for one, very strongly demur to that declaration; and there are thousands of the most intelligent men in England who will do the same. I shall not attempt to go at any length into this delicate question of "*Church property*," I rather prefer leaving it to abler hands; but there are two or three common-sense views of the subject which may be just glanced at. I believe it is now pretty freely admitted, by candid and well-informed persons, that what is called "*Church property*" is of two kinds,—that which has been *bequeathed* to her by her own members, and that which is under the direct control of Parliament. Now, if we are to call things by their proper names, we should say, the first of these is *bonâ-fide Church* property, and the other is as really and truly *State* property, or *National* property. The real Church property is, of course, to be sacredly guarded and preserved for the use and benefit of the Episcopal Church,—as much so as any chapel or school endowment in the kingdom; but as for the other—the national property—which is

employed at present by the State for religious purposes, that is quite at the disposal of Parliament: Parliament has shown the control it has over it by several acts passed within the last thirty years. The conclusion, then, to which we are brought by this simple view of the subject, appears to be this: Should the legislature, at any future time, think that the cause of religion would be better promoted without a State provision than with it, they, having a due regard to what are called "vested interests," are at perfect liberty to take it away.

We have thus far seen to what extent a State Church is compatible with religious liberty. We may now ask another question, and it is one of no small importance either: Is religious liberty perfectly compatible with a State Church? In other words, Can the Government of a country, in which a State Church exists, grant liberty of conscience to its subjects, without endangering the *safety* of that Church? I say no; certainly not. To me, it appears quite impossible, especially under a representative Government like ours, to grant universal liberty of conscience without bringing the State Church into jeopardy. The passing of the TOLERATION ACT was the first blow, not *aimed at*, but *given to* the Esta-

blished Church of this country; and, I believe, it was a blow that must ultimately prove fatal to its existence—I mean as a national institution. If we compare the State Church to a building, the passing of the Toleration Act did much to undermine the foundation of the building. It has been tottering and shaking, more or less, ever since, and it will continue to do so, till it come to the ground. The act itself was nothing more than a simple measure of justice, and was imperatively demanded by the times, whatever consequences might follow. We do not suppose for a moment, that the men who passed that act had the least apprehension that it would *endanger* the State Church. They had not the most distant idea of the *results* to which it would lead. They had no conception that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the nonconformists of this kingdom would equal, if not exceed, those found within the walls of the Establishment itself. And what they *may* be in a few years, no mortal on earth can presume to tell; but, judging from the operations of the present day, their progress is likely to be more rapid and triumphant than ever.

In times gone by, the Church boasted loudly of her "*majorities;*" that seemed to be her

stronghold, the most powerful argument for her defence. But where are her majorities now? are they not scattered to the four winds? Where is her majority in Scotland? is it not gone? Where is her majority in Ireland, if ever she had one? is it not fled? Where is her majority in Wales? has it not disappeared? And last, though not least, where is her majority in England? She cannot boast of a majority even here, unless she include the dissipated and thoughtless multitude, who call themselves "Church folks," but scarcely ever go. She has no majority of *attendants* in her sanctuaries. In 1851, when the census was taken, she was barely equal to the dissenters. Since then they have greatly increased, so that we may safely affirm she is now in the minority. She was once in the ascendant, but she has lost it, and she has lost it for ever. And more than that—she will not be able to retain her present relative position. With all the nobility and gentry to help her, she cannot keep pace with the voluntary principle. It will leave her panting and struggling in the distance, in spite of all her efforts.

Now, can any man, in his common senses, imagine that things can go on in this way, *year after* year, without the State Church being

brought into danger? If that Church, seeing that she monopolises the ecclesiastical revenues of this kingdom, be a standing injustice, will the nonconformists always be satisfied for that injustice to remain? Is it to be supposed that they will quietly sit down and see four or five millions of public property annually devoted to *one section* of the Christian Church, while all the rest are supporting themselves by their own voluntary offerings? I trow not; even churchmen themselves must begin to see, if they do not see already, that such a state of things is a perfect anomaly.

But, in addition to these things, there are two facts which will stimulate both churchmen and dissenters to seek a radical change in the present system. The one is—the way in which the revenues of the Church are appropriated. It is proverbially known that those revenues, for the most part, are disposed of among the aristocratical families; in other words, to those who have least need of them. The other and more important point to which I refer is—the *false doctrine* which many of these men are propagating from week to week. It is a well-established fact, that, in a vast number of cases, they are proclaiming sentiments which are at

the very antipodes of the gospel. They are either preaching a dry, cold, insipid morality, which is never likely to stir the hearts of their hearers, or they are extolling a few religious ceremonies, to the neglect of all the vital principles of experimental godliness: thus leading the people in the paths of error and delusion. Can the enlightened, godly portion of this nation be satisfied that such a state of things should go on much longer? Will not compassion for the souls of men impel them to plead, and to plead *earnestly*, for the separation of Church and State?

The reader might be ready to say, "According to the views laid down in this chapter, the Reformers themselves were wrong in setting up State Churches *at all.*" I fully believe they were; and I can hardly conceive how a really enlightened and candid man can think otherwise. In setting up these State Churches in different lands, they acted in direct violation of their own professed principle. They first asserted the right of private judgment in the interpretation of God's Book, and, on this principle, they protested against the supremacy *of the Pope*, and all the corruptions of Popery.

Having done this, instead of leaving others to be as free as themselves, they forged fetters for the consciences of men, by prescribing creeds and formularies, and setting up State religions, to which they expected the nations were to bow and submit. This was the *grand error of the Reformation*,—THE CONNECTING OF CHURCH AND STATE TOGETHER! And I most firmly and conscientiously believe it is absolutely necessary for that error to be corrected, for that union to be dissolved, before peace and tranquillity can prevail, and before Christianity can greatly prosper throughout the vast continent of Europe and the world at large. Thank God, the signs of the times are all pointing in that direction, and giving us pretty good reason to think that the period which shall witness that event may be much nearer at hand than many imagine.

It was broadly affirmed in a public print, the other day, "That National Church Establishments were *the offspring of the dark ages.*" There is no doubt of it; the fact is plainly implied in the preceding statements. But that is not all. With equal truth it may be said, They are fit for nothing *but* the dark ages; THEY CANNOT LIVE IN THE LIGHT! This may appear strange language to those who have

been accustomed to view them as the very climax of national dignity and glory, and as essential to the preservation of truth and righteousness in the earth. But, we presume, a few general remarks will suffice to place the subject before the reader in the most convincing manner.

If we look back upon the history of our country for a hundred years, or a little more, the majority of the people at that time were in a state of fearful darkness and moral degradation. Religion was just a matter of form and custom, of outward show and ceremony, and very little more. The people went to church—repeated their prayers, heard the parson talk about something for a quarter of an hour, and then went home again. This was the sum and substance, the beginning and the end, of the religion of a very large part of the church-going population at that time. Ask any faithful historian, and he'll tell you the same. As to the dissenters, they were then comparatively few; so we pass them by for the present. The age to which we refer was unquestionably an age of gross ignorance, formality, and spiritual death. But those days of ignorance and spiritual death were *palmy days* for a Church Establishment.

No cry at that time of "the Church being in danger." Everything went on very quietly and comfortably. Both priests and people did pretty much as they liked; and winked at each other's follies and infirmities. When the "tithe dinner" came round, and the parson tried to make a speech, he, as a matter of course, praised the Church to the very heavens, and spoke of it as the very ultimatum of all perfection; while the company, by their hearty acclamations, endorsed and confirmed all that he said. With a full bumper on their lips, they shouted, "Church and State for ever," and so they went merrily on.

Now, reader, this is no caricature, no picture of the imagination; it is a simple, matter-of-fact statement of what occurred thousands of times in a year. But what a change, what a blessed and glorious change, has come over this kingdom since that period! What a flood of religious light has been poured upon her! a light that has penetrated every corner of the land, and spread itself over all ranks of the community. Yes, within the walls of the Establishment itself a great light has sprung up. And what's the consequence of that? the con-

sequence is, that churchmen are looking into her corruptions and abuses, and crying out for reform. But a much greater light has sprung up *outside* her walls; and thence has arisen the dissatisfaction that now prevails, and the desire for a thorough radical change. Never was the opposition to a Church Establishment so strong as at the present day; and why? because the people were never so well informed on religious subjects; and as the light increases, so will the opposition increase with it. If the opposition be so strong now, what will it be when the light shall be increased in a twofold degree? Then, if not before then, there will be such a burst of indignation against the corruptions of the Church, as will shake her to her foundation, and ultimately sever her connection with the State. Do we not speak rationally and truly when we affirm that "Church Establishments are fit for nothing but the dark ages, and that *they cannot live in the light?*" As the people get more and more informed, they will increasingly see that it is not the business of civil rulers to legislate on religious affairs; that they cannot do it without trampling on the sacred rights of conscience; that the machinery they employ most egregiously fails of securing the

religious instruction of the people; and that the whole system introduces strife and dissatisfaction throughout all ranks of the community; and just as these convictions on these points strengthen and increase, will they naturally desire to see the system brought to an end.

As we have been speaking about the country getting more and more "enlightened," perhaps a few words introduced here on the subject of *education* would not be out of place. For the last thirty years and upwards the Church of England has manifested a most uncommon zeal in the *cause of education*. But what was it that moved her to that? Was it the natural impulse of her own breast? No such thing. Then what stirred her up to show such concern about the education of the "working classes?" Oh, the dissenters, to be sure; the zeal and activity of dissenters. They led the van, and she, in self-defence, was constrained to bring up the rear. Churchmen saw plainly enough that the dissenters were rapidly getting hold of the affections of the people; and so they said one to another, "We must begin the work of education, or the land will be filled with dissent, and the Church will be ruined." So, then,

the dissenters *compelled* them to this work, and they are glad that anything has roused the Church from her apathy and indifference.

And now we say, Let them go on; let them educate the people with the utmost zeal and perseverance. But we also say, Let it be a *real* education, and not a sham one. Let them teach the people to think and to investigate; and, especially, to take God's Word into their own hands, and judge for themselves on all religious subjects. If they *do* this, will it strengthen the Church, or will it not? For a while it may seem to do so. But will it ultimately make them more attached to the Church *as an establishment?* that's the question. We think not. On the contrary, we think it will open their eyes to see her corruptions, both in doctrine and practice, and make them wish and plead for her separation from the State, as the only radical cure for all her evils. We say again to the Church, Educate the people, but do it thoroughly; discipline their mental powers, so that they may be competent to judge of what they read and hear. Labour to spread light and truth through the nation, if it be possible, with the rapidity of lightning itself; *and that* will be the very thing to hasten on

the consummation we so earnestly wish. It is as clear to us as any simple maxim or moral principle, that National Church Establishments *cannot* live long in the light.

The following is a brief summary of the chief points adverted to in this chapter: First point, The principle of a State Church, and the first principle of Protestantism, are essentially opposed to each other. If the *first* be right, the second is wrong—and if the *second* be right, the first is wrong; all the logic of the three kingdoms can never make them harmonize together. Second point, Religion is an affair between God and a man's own conscience, and he is responsible to none but his MAKER. It is his duty to *support* that faith and worship which appears to him most in harmony with the sacred Scriptures. It follows, as a natural consequence, that he ought not to support anything else,—and to *compel* him to do so is the most despicable tyranny. Third point, The principle of a State Church is essentially *popish*. In both cases it is human authority legislating in religious affairs,—ordaining creeds, rites, ceremonials, etc. The principal difference is, that in one case the authority is at Rome, and

in the other (so far as England is concerned) in the British House of Commons. Fourth point, A State Church is not compatible with perfect religious liberty, because it imposes a tax on those who dissent from it. On the other hand, if liberty of worship be granted where a State Church exists, that liberty is not compatible with the safety of the Church,—it must, of necessity, bring the Church into danger, and, in all probability finally overthrow it. Fifth point, The Church formerly boasted of her *majorities*, and urged this as a strong reason for her continued connection with the State. But where are her majorities now? To say nothing of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, she has not a majority of *worshippers* even in England. Her majorities are gone, and they are gone for ever. Sixth point, State Churches are the root and source of all religious persecutions; their history is the history of cruelty and blood. Had they never been known, persecution could not have existed. Seventh point, The Reformers were wrong in setting up State Churches at all: it was the *grand error* of the Reformation; and that error must be rectified before religion can greatly prosper, either in England or elsewhere. *Eighth point*, State Churches are fit only for

the dark ages, for they cannot live in the light. The opposition that is now made to them is a demonstrative proof of the truth of this sentiment. Last point, Of late years the Church has manifested an uncommon zeal in the cause of education. Let her go on, and give the people the best education in her power: that will open their eyes to see her deformities; and, perhaps, more than anything else, will hasten on that vital change in her constitution, which will so largely contribute to her own spiritual prosperity, and accelerate the day when truth and piety, religion and happiness, shall universally prevail.

CHAPTER IV.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS EMPLOYED IN DEFENCE OF CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

SEEING that these establishments, in general, have had such immense revenues attached to them, and those revenues, for the most part, have been divided among the favoured few, they have always found a number of special pleaders: no doubt some of these advocates were actuated by very honourable intentions, and thought they were pleading for the public good,—whilst, in numerous cases, there is too much reason to fear they were powerfully influenced by interested motives. During the last half century, in particular, men have taxed their ingenuity to the uttermost in order to find out plausible reasons and excuses for these institutions. Whether they were convinced or not by their own reasonings, it is not for the writer of these pages to say, but certainly he has never yet met with an argument which he *thought* could not be subjected to the most

rational confutation. He has read sermons, pamphlets, and newspaper articles, again and again, in defence of Church Establishments, but they never led him, for a single moment, to doubt the correctness of his own principles. Seldom have the advocates of State Churches ventured to argue on *Scripture* ground: sometimes they have rummaged among the ancient, and now obsolete, laws of Moses, but all this could avail them nothing; for the apostle tells us so clearly that this "old covenant," or ceremonial law, "was done away," in order that a more glorious dispensation might be introduced to the world. Therefore, if we are to have arguments from Scripture, in favour of these institutions, they must come from the New Testament; and surely it is most reasonable to affirm that, if our Lord and His apostles intended that civil rulers should set up National Church Establishments, they would have given some explicit directions on the subject. But have they done so? If they have, where shall we find them?—shall we find them in the four Gospels, or in the book of the Acts, or in the Epistles to the Churches? No, indeed. It is unquestionably certain that such directions are not to be found within the pages of the New

Testament at all. The apostles of our blessed Lord understood too well the nature of that kingdom they were commissioned to establish to trust such matters to the rulers of this world. They knew that it was the duty of the Church to propagate itself, and they taught the Church that such was her duty; they taught those who knew and felt the truth, that it was their duty to encourage its propagation to the ends of the earth; to look out for suitable men to preach the Gospel; to be fellow-helpers to those who were engaged in the good work; and to pray earnestly and constantly "that the word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified." These things they taught the Church, both in their writings and preaching; and they knew full well that if ever the Church delegated that power, or that business, to the rulers of this world, she would betray the solemn trust committed to her charge, destroy all distinction between herself and the world, allure carnal and ungodly men into the ministry, prepare the way for the most deadly error and superstition, and introduce a multitude of evils which no language can adequately pourtray. Well, in process of time, *the professing Church of God did* delegate this power

to the princes and potentates of this world,—the Church and the State were linked together, and the evils resulting from that unhallowed union have been perpetuated, from generation to generation, down to the present time.

Seeing then that the New Testament is perfectly *silent* on the subject of National Church Establishments, what have the advocates of these institutions to say on their behalf? How do they try to vindicate them? In the absence of all Scriptural rule and authority, they have recourse to what is called EXPEDIENCY. They say such establishments are *necessary*. Very well, let us suppose it. Then we ask, What are they necessary for? Churchmen reply, "They are necessary for two things in particular: *To preserve the unity of the faith*, and *to perpetuate Christianity in the world.*" Noble objects, certainly: let us see what they have done for them.

We inquire, in the first place, what the Church Establishment of *England* has done "to preserve the unity of the faith." Whether her standards of faith and discipline be strictly correct, or not, does not affect the present question: the Church *has* her standards, her creeds,

articles, and formularies; and the clergy, before they can present themselves to minister at her altars, are bound, upon oath, to declare "their unfeigned assent and consent" to those creeds and articles,—in fact, "to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer." One might naturally suppose, if we did not know to the contrary, that there would be a grand unity, an essential agreement, among these men: that, while allowing for some *shades* of difference on minor points, there would be a real oneness of sentiment on all the vital elements of Christianity,—taking it for granted, of course, that those vital elements are in the articles themselves. Well, now, what is the fact? The fact is just this—as almost every reader of a newspaper in the kingdom knows perfectly well—that among these very men, who have all subscribed to one book, and to everything contained *in* that book, there is the greatest possible discrepancy and contradiction! At this very time, almost every grade and shade of doctrine, from the highest Calvinism even down to what borders on Infidelity itself, is proclaimed in the pulpits of the Established Church, and reiterated in speeches and *pamphlets*, from one end of the kingdom to the

other. These are stubborn facts, patent to all the world; so that it must be palpably clear to every man possessing an ordinary share of intellect, that if the Church Establishment of England was intended to secure "unity of faith," it has most egregiously failed to answer its design. And it must be almost as evident that, unless its advocates can bring forward some better argument for its defence, it must soon cease to command the respect even of its professed admirers, and, ere long, be numbered among the things of a by-gone age.

In the *Eclectic Review* for December, 1861, there is an article of superlative excellence on this very subject; I mean, the diversities of sentiment in our National Church. It is entitled "THE SCHSIMS OF EPISCOPACY." The writer states that there are four great divisions in the Church of England at the present time, besides others of a minor description. He says that these parties are known by the following terms or phrases:—"High Church," "Low Church," "Hard Church," and "Broad Church." He then proceeds to give a description of their individual peculiarities; but I will not trouble the reader at present with a record

of these distinctions. Suffice it to say, that, by these four parties in the Establishment, all kinds of doctrinal opinions and ecclesiastical sentiments are propagated, both from the pulpit and the press. The real truth of the matter is just this—the Church of England, at this very moment, is a *perfect Babel.* She is neither more nor less than a *confusion of tongues.* She always was so, to a certain extent; but perhaps never so much so, or so manifestly so, as at the present time.

If a man wish to be convinced, by his own personal observation, of the truth or falsehood of these statements, let him go to twelve parish churches, on twelve successive Sabbath-days, and hear twelve of the leading men belonging to the several parties. At the same time, let him take notes of all that he hears; and, at the end of the three months, sit down and compare these notes together. What a motley group of doctrinal sentiments and religious opinions he would have! In one discourse, probably, high Calvinism would be preached, in another that doctrine as flatly contradicted; in one baptismal regeneration zealously contended for, in another the same doctrine exploded as a figment of Popery; in one justifica-

tion by faith strenuously advocated, in another justification by works, or by faith and works together; in one apostolic succession and priestly absolution resolutely insisted on, in another those very sentiments held up to the scorn and contempt of every enlightened reader of the New Testament!

Such are some of the contradictory teachings of men who have sworn to the same creeds and articles, and who tell us, very gravely, that we *must* have an Established Church in order to secure "*unity of faith.*" Surely, when these men try *in future* to defend Church Establishments, for very shame they will talk no more about "unity of faith." If they persist in writing and preaching such consummate nonsense, the very boys in our Sunday-schools will laugh them to scorn. ' So far from there being unity in the Establishment, there is the greatest possible discord and confusion. There is doctrine against doctrine, and party against party, living at drawn swords to each other. Where there is so much *contrary* teaching, we are sure there must be a great deal that is positively heretical. There is a prayer used every Sabbath in the Church, which says, "From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, good Lord,

deliver us." Surely the people of England may pray from their very hearts, "From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism in the Established Church of this land, good Lord, deliver us." May the good Lord deliver us, as a nation, from all these evils, by causing the union to be dissolved from which they proceed. Anything short of a separation of Church and State will leave all these disorders rankling in her breast.

I go on to observe, that the unity of faith we shall in vain look for in the Church of England we shall find, to a great extent, among the leading dissenting communities. Take, for example, the following denominations:—the Presbyterians, the Independents, the Baptists, and the various sections of the Church of Christ included in the term Methodists. Then look at the leading doctrines avowed and propagated by these four dissenting bodies. Are they not really and essentially one? The differences that prevail among them relate chiefly to matters of Church government, which do not affect the vitals of religion. The truth of all this is clearly demonstrated by the facts that they are frequently interchanging pulpits; they *occupy* each other's platforms, feel at home in

each other's society, and work together for general objects. In short, they feel they have but one grand subject to preach—the Cross of Christ; and one grand object to promote—the glory of God in the salvation of men.

Go to their chapels, whenever and wherever you please, and no uncertain sound will salute your ears. The distinguishing principles of the gospel, which we usually call "*evangelical*," and which are frequently referred to in this work, in one form or other will be sure to come before you. I say, again, these various religious communities are essentially one. There is a grand and glorious unity prevailing among them. It may be said of them, in the language of the apostle, they have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." So, then, it comes to this at last, that while we are told that we must have an Established Church to secure "unity of faith," the *real* unity that exists in the land is *outside* the Church, and not *in* it. Among the leading nonconformists, there is the most delightful agreement on all essential points; while within the Church there are the most violent conflicting parties, quarrelling about the very vitals of Christianity, and thus tempting worldly men to reject the truth altogether.

Surely these facts ought to convince any candid and reflecting man, that something *more than subscription to creeds and articles is necessary to preserve the Church from deadly and destructive error, and to secure a thoroughly sound, faithful, evangelical ministry.*

Perhaps a thoughtful and inquiring churchman might be disposed to ask, "How is it that there should be such a strange diversity of sentiment among the ministers of the Establishment, and such a general agreement among those of other denominations?" Without presuming wholly to account for this fact, one or two things may be stated, which will go far to solve the mystery. Your system, as I have endeavoured to show in the second chapter, presents the most powerful temptations to worldly men to enter the ministry for their own secular advantage. And not only so, but I presume the examinations which the candidates undergo before ordination, are of a very loose and general character. They may be tested, to some extent, about their classical attainments and literary qualifications, but, judging from the number of unsuitable men we find in the Church, I should infer that little inquiry is *made* as to what they know about the new

birth, and all the principles of vital godliness; and so long as this laxity of discipline prevails, the Church may always expect to be deluged with conflicting opinions and deadly heresies. Among dissenters the very reverse of all this is the case. The utmost possible precaution is used to admit none into our colleges and pulpits but men of *sterling piety* and of promising *talent* too. And if, by chance, one do get in that is destitute of either of these qualifications, he is very glad soon to get out again. Since, then, they seek to have none but really godly men in the ministry, and as all godly men are taught by the Spirit of God, and led into all essential truth, this will go far to account for the great unanimity of doctrinal principle and religious feeling that prevails among them.

But it is quite time we went on to consider the SECOND reason assigned for the necessity of Church Establishments, and that is, *The preservation and extension of Christianity in the world.* The advocates of the Church and State system say, "There must be a State provision to secure the religious instruction of the people; it would not do to leave the matter to the voluntary principle." This is what they say, and have

said a thousand times over. Now let us try to find out if there be any force or weight in the assertion. I contend, in the first place, that it is not in the *power* of the State to provide this instruction; and, secondly, I contend that if it *had* the power, it is not necessary it should be put forth. The people will provide religious teachers for themselves, and that of the best description, too.

I contend, then, that the State has not the *power* to make this provision. The State can put ten thousand men into ten thousand parishes, and they may be what the world would call "well-informed and well-educated men;" but I contend that unless they have the grace of God in their hearts, the love of souls swelling in their bosom, and a real mental adaptation for the work,—unless they possess all these qualifications, no *real* provision has been made for the religious instruction of the people. In fact, you have thrown a stumbling-block in the way of their instruction, and rendered it far more difficult for others to get access to them—such as would rejoice to preach the gospel to them in all its purity, and to watch over their eternal interests. I say, then, it is *not* the duty of the *State to* provide religious teachers for the peo-

ple, for she has not the power to provide the men possessing the requisite qualifications; and unless she could do that, it would be infinitely better if she did not attempt to provide them at all.

I go on to observe, secondly, that if the State *had* the power to make such a provision, *it would not be necessary* for them to employ it. The people, in the exercise of the voluntary principle, will make the provision for themselves. They will both look out for the right sort of men, and provide the means requisite for their support. Yes, they will do everything that is necessary for the preservation and extension of Christianity, both at home and abroad. The gospel of Christ was supported by the free-will offerings of the people for the first three hundred years, not only without the aid of the State, but when all the civil powers were arrayed against her, and she never won brighter laurels, never triumphed more gloriously, than during that memorable period of her history.

And, now, what has the voluntary principle done for religion in England during the last century, and especially during the last sixty years? Look at the immense number of chapels

built within that period, and some of them of a very magnificent description. There is scarcely a village now, of any extent, without its pretty neat chapel; and in some of them three or four. Then think of the thousands of ministers constantly supported by the people, without any endowment whatever from the State. Then glance your eye at the schools—both Sabbath and day-schools—built on the same principle, and maintained by the same parties. Then look at the efforts made, at the same time, in carrying on foreign operations; the vast sums of money annually contributed for the support of Missionary, Bible, and Tract Societies, and, I might say, a hundred other things.

In the face of these stubborn and undeniable facts, who shall any more presume to say, that "religion *must* be endowed by the State, because the people are not willing to support it themselves?" It is a gross libel on the people to say they will not. The land is full of the glorious results of the voluntary principle, and it is all but a certainty that they will continue to increase from year to year. If all these chapels and schools, built and supported by the people, could speak, what would they say? I *mean* what would they say to our legislature?

I imagine it would be something like this: "Gentlemen of the House of Commons, we should feel greatly obliged to you if you would please to mind your own proper business; and, as to religious matters, leave them to the people. They will do a vast deal better *without* your interference than with it. Your business —your proper business—is with the things of *Cæsar*, not with the things of God. Your business, *as legislators*, is with the kingdoms of *this* world, not with the kingdom of Christ. That is the business of the Church, the whole body of the faithful; and you will act as just and wise men, when you leave it entirely and exclusively in their hands."

In order to show, still more fully, the efficacy of the voluntary principle, and that State support for religion is not necessary, I solicit the attention of the reader to two or three particular circumstances.

In the first place I refer to that denomination of religious professors styled the "Primitive Methodists." This people, as a body, are proverbially poor; they consist almost entirely of the working classes. It is but little more than fifty years since they commenced their opera-

tions, and now they have something like eight hundred travelling preachers, with their chapels, and schools, and everything to correspond. In addition to these things, they are carrying on missionary enterprises in various parts of the world. I feel it due to say, respecting the ministers of this denomination, that they are a self-denying, laborious race of men, and have been greatly blessed of God in the conversion of souls; and we are sure the people must have been distinguished by uncommon zeal and devotedness, or they could not have accomplished what we plainly see before our eyes. Tell us no more about the necessity of a State provision for the religious instruction of the people—every day's experience falsifies the assertion.

The next illustration I shall give is from *Wales*. The power of the voluntary principle has been most triumphantly displayed in the principality. It has often been said, "The voluntary principle might do in large towns and thickly populated districts, but would not do for poor and thinly scattered neighbourhoods." The state of religious parties in Wales, at the present time, is a clear demonstration to the contrary. It is a fact, asserted and published by a minister of the Church of England,

that four-fifths of the worshipping inhabitants of that country are dissenters; and it is equally true that they are fast multiplying every day. The efforts they have recently put forth in the way of chapel building, and the exertions now being made, by one denomination, for the erection of a respectable and commodious college, are such as to call forth the grateful admiration of all who are acquainted with them. It would seem almost as if the sovereign Disposer of all events were determined to confound the advocates of the Church and State system, by making the voluntary principle the *most* triumphant where it was the *least* likely to be successful.

A third remarkable instance, I may mention, is that of the "*Free Church of Scotland.*" It is now about twenty-five years since they seceded from the Establishment. The money raised by that community, since that period, for building churches and manses, supporting ministers and missionaries, erecting and maintaining colleges and schools, and encouraging other benevolent objects, is almost incredible. If the statements did not come from men of undoubted veracity, we might feel strongly inclined to question their correctness; but their "Reports" are before the world, and challenge

public investigation. During the first three years—as nearly as I can tell—they raised, for all purposes, about one million sterling; and, in the annual report for 1861, we were given to understand that the whole amount, from the commencement of that time, was about four times that sum! With such magnificent displays of voluntary support to the cause of Christ, shall we ever again be told that a parliamentary endowed Church is necessary for the preservation of Christianity in the world? We shall probably be told so again, a hundred times over, by men who have a sinking cause to maintain, and nothing better to support it; but let such men know that their vague and groundless assertions are beginning to go for very little with an increasingly wise and discerning public.

I might go on to record the triumphs of the voluntary principle, even within the walls of the Established Church herself. I remember to have read, some little time ago, that, within the last few years, her members had raised, for different purposes, not less than nine millions of money! and, probably, ere this time, the *sum has* been considerably augmented. This

fact is sufficient to show what they *could* do, if left to their own resources. No doubt, the Church has been wonderfully stirred up to make these efforts by the unceasing exertions of dissenters; and she is thus gradually and effectually preparing for that time when all Government support shall be withdrawn, and Christianity be left entirely to the spontaneous liberality of her own sincere friends and admirers. On the ground, then, of these numerous and well-established facts, we confidently affirm that a Church Establishment is *not* necessary for the preservation of Christianity in the world; nay, so far from its being *necessary* for such a purpose, we firmly believe that the endowment system is the greatest hindrance to her advancement, and that, when this Church and State connection shall cease, real religion will flourish much more, both within the walls of the Church herself and throughout the country at large.

But more than this: Just look at what we are doing in order to keep up this Church Establishment of England. Are we not giving countenance to a system of priestcraft and superstition, which has been the scourge and curse of Europe for ages and generations? Are we not sanctioning and supporting *Popery*, and

that in the most direct manner? Are we not annually making large grants from the Exchequer to support the college at Maynooth, to maintain Catholic schools, and to spread Catholic tenets in various ways? And what are we, a professedly Protestant nation, doing all this for? If I understand it at all, it is just to prop up and maintain the Church Establishment. These grants from the public purse, for the direct support of the Church of Rome, are a sop to the Catholic priests, in order that the revenues of the English and Irish Church may be preserved unimpaired. So that this Protestant nation, which boasts so loudly of its sound evangelical principles, is supporting semi-Popery inside the Church, and rank Popery outside the Church. Is it not so? Can any man *show* us that it is not so? Oh, what fearful inconsistencies and absurdities do grow out of this Church and State system! And no wonder, for it is a system of man's devising, from first to last; it has no solid foundation to rest upon: it cannot be vindicated either by reason or revelation. If religion be a matter between God and every man's own conscience, then the very idea of civil governments setting up creeds and forms of worship, and compelling men to

pay for them, is the very climax of folly and presumption. Happy will it be for the world when civil rulers shall see these things, and act upon them. In other words, Happy will it be for the world when the connection of Church and State shall be dissolved, when all parties shall be placed on the same level, and when the only contention among them shall be which shall do most to advance the cause and kingdom of their common Lord and Master.

There is a class of persons in the world, and perhaps not a very small one either, who cannot hear this subject adverted to without being quite disconcerted; I mean, the *separation* of Church and State. It is associated in their mind with the most gloomy apprehensions. They seem to imagine that, were such an event to take place, the very heavens would come down on their heads, the blessing of God be withheld from the land, and vice and infidelity reign rampant amongst us. To say the least of it, they think their sanctuaries, to a large extent, would be deserted, their religious privileges curtailed, and everything thrown into disorder and confusion. It is almost superfluous to remark, that all such anticipations are utterly

groundless. They arise from educational prejudices, and from a short-sighted view of the subject altogether. These persons have been so nursed and cradled in the Church and State system, so accustomed to think, and so taught to believe, that religion could not stand without the supporting arm of the civil power, that all the facts and reasonings in the world make no impression on them. They may be surrounded by the fruits and effects of the voluntary principle on every hand; they may see dissenting communities, of every section of the Church, flourishing to an amazing extent, by the free-will offerings of the people; still, they cannot divest themselves of the idea that were Church and State to be totally separated, the most disastrous consequences would be likely to follow.

But, whatever may be the result of the separation, that event will most assuredly come. All the signs of the times indicate its approach; and the man must be obtusely blind who does not, more or less, perceive them. There is a growing conviction in the public mind, that National Church Establishments are doomed and that their continuance is only a question of time. They were doomed in the United States *of* America long ago, and not a relic of them

now remains in that vast country. We may safely affirm they are doomed in the colonies of Great Britain; they are either dead or dying; their days are numbered there. Then, may we not say, to a large extent, they are doomed on the continent of Europe? What marvellous changes have taken place in some parts of that continent within the last ten or twelve years! Statesmen, of the first rank and order, have boldly asserted that Church and State ought *not* to be joined together; that, by such a union, both must be fettered, and Christianity impeded and disgraced. In accordance with the preceding remarks, we feel no hesitation whatever in affirming, that Church Establishments are doomed in England, Ireland, and Scotland. Of course, it will not be without a mighty struggle that the separation will actually take place. But the struggle will come; it hastens every hour; and who can rationally doubt the result?

There are so many parties interested in keeping things as they are, that all their forces will be called into requisition to ward off the evil day, or what they think the evil day, to the last extremity. Bishops, of course, will fight hard in the Lords, and honourable members in

the Commons ; newspaper writers will contend, *if it be only to get their wages for doing it;* and the clergy will put forth their utmost strength, in pulpits, on platforms, and through the press. The English language will be ransacked to find terms and phrases in which to laud and magnify the Establishment. Although some of them know that she is as corrupt, both in doctrine and practice, as she can well be, they will try to make her appear so fair and comely, that the ignorant multitude will be half inclined to believe there is really no spot in her. The land will ring with the shout, "Our glorious Constitution in Church and State." Men of all ranks and parties will join in the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Those, especially, who have their gain by this modern Diana, will stretch every nerve to preserve her dignity and glory, and to persuade the world still to worship her.

But all their efforts, however combined, must ultimately prove abortive. With all her wealth and magnificence, she must come down. The Church and State connection *must* be dissolved. Her own divisions and distractions, more than anything else, will hasten her dissolution; and all parties must, more or less, see it.

The Church of England, as an *Established* Church, is destined to fall, by the highest authority. Our Lord and Master hath said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand ; and a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." Well, is she not a kingdom divided against itself? Is she not all but rent asunder by the contending factions in her own bosom? Is she not composed of the most discordant and conflicting elements? Are not her pulpits occupied by men of the most opposite principles? and is there not the rankest hostility prevailing among them? Oh, what a spectacle, what a direful spectacle of contention and division does the Church Establishment of this country present before the world at the present moment! Nor is there the most distant prospect of any improvement. There is not the slightest ground to expect that these conflicting parties will be brought into any harmony of principle or feeling; but rather that they will go on from bad to worse, until the nation will be sick to her very heart with their everlasting and interminable strifes.

I say again, The Church of England, as an establishment, is doomed. She is "weighed in the balances, and found wanting." She has

ceased, to a great extent, to be a faithful witness for God. In other words, she has ceased, to a great degree, to be the defender of sound *Protestant truth.* She is propagating the errors, and imitating the ceremonies of the Romish communion. She is thoroughly distracted with conflicting creeds and sentiments: one is crying one thing, and another, another; so that, in numerous cases, the people must be completely at a loss to know what they are to believe and to do. In addition to these things, by her public "*sale of livings*" she is disgracing herself in the eyes of all thinking men, and broadly telling the world that the clerical office, in a vast number of cases, is just a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, and nothing more.

Is it not time for this nation, which professes to be the most enlightened and godly nation upon earth, to lift up its trumpet voice against this Church and State system, and to protest against this buying and selling of the souls of men? Can such a system as *this* be necessary for the propagation of Christianity in the world? Rather, we should say, is not such a system far more calculated to foster hypocrisy, and to lead men in the paths of error and destruction, than to lead them to God, to holiness, and to heaven?

CHAPTER V.

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS PRODUCTIVE OF AN ANTI-CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

THE Protestants of Great Britain and Ireland are divided into two great parties; generally designated "Churchmen" and "Dissenters." The term churchmen includes all connected with the two Establishments—Episcopalian and Presbyterian; and the term dissenters, the various bodies of professing Christians who are separated from them. If we go back to the middle of the last century, we shall find that the dissenters were comparatively a small body; but about that time, or soon afterward, their numbers began to swell very considerably. The labours of those two apostolic men—Whitfield and Wesley—immensely increased their ranks, so that by the close of that century they had struck their roots deep in the land, and had become a very numerous and influential portion of the community. Since then, as everybody knows who cares to know aught about such mat-

ters, they have prodigiously multiplied. When the census was taken in 1851, churchmen were strangely confounded at the returns which were made; and even dissenters themselves were not a little astonished at their own progress.

So long as the dissenters of this kingdom were few and weak, they were despised and contemned, and little notice was taken of them. If they happened now and then to make a little more noise than usual, by the opening of a chapel, or the visit of some extraordinary preacher, such a circumstance would be almost sure, in certain circles, to call forth some bigoted, contemptuous remark. It would probably be something like this: "These dissenters, who are making a little bustle and stir to-day, are only a few weak-headed fanatics and enthusiasts; they'll do neither much good nor harm, and perhaps in a while disappear altogether." But, lo and behold, by-and-by these fanatics and enthusiasts swelled into such numbers, and took such a position in society, that the High Church party, in particular, began to be alarmed; and feelings of jealousy and indignation took possession of their breasts. We can imagine them saying one to another, "What's to be done with these Methodistical

dissenters? If we let them alone, 'tis impossible to say to what these things may grow, or what may be the final consequences. We must preach against them, write against them, talk against them, and by every possible means try to put them down."

So they began to fulminate and storm against dissent and dissenters, with all their might and main; to speak against dissent as schism; the doctrines of dissent as dangerous, if not damnable; and dissenters themselves as the most whimsical and deluded fanatics in the world. Even in large towns and cities this feeling of bitter hostility to dissenters and their operations manifested itself in no ordinary degree; whilst, in small towns and villages, this spirit of hatred and intolerance became rampant. When the dissenting preacher made his appearance on a Sabbath morning or evening, that was the signal for a general row and hubbub. Prohibitions and threatenings were sent forth in abundance. Servants and labourers were closely watched, and forbidden to enter the conventicle on pain of losing their situations. While farmers and tradesmen were given to understand that it would be dangerous, if not ruinous, to them if they dared to leave the

parish church and go to the conventicle, even though the veriest drone might be occupying the pulpit at the same time. In this way numbers, in a dependent situation, were restrained from following their own inclinations, knowing the spirit of the men with whom they had to do; and those who now live in large towns, and who enjoy unrestricted liberty, have no idea of the extent to which this spiritual despotism is carried in the present day.

So far as I can understand, the first grand effort of the High Church party to stay the progress of dissent, and if possible to crush it altogether, was the appearance of the "*Oxford Tracts*," some thirty years ago; and since then there has been a stream of precious things, all intended, as I believe, to accomplish the same noble object. Unfortunately for these Oxford writers, they were born at least half a century too late. The people had already studied their Bibles too well, and learnt too much sound evangelical truth from their own pastors, to be carried away with the flimsy, popish trash which these publications frequently contained. Not only did they fail to produce any serious effect on the minds of dissenters, but intelligent and reflecting

churchmen, who had some knowledge of pure gospel truth, would be more likely, by this means, to have their affections alienated from the Establishment than otherwise. If the object of these writers was, as I have stated it to be, to arrest the progress of nonconformity, almost every child in the kingdom is aware how miserably that object has failed. The most illiterate persons know full well that dissenters, of nearly every class, have been making rapid advances during the last thirty years; and their prospects of increasing success were never brighter than at the present time.

One special effort of these Oxford publications was, to exalt the *ministry* of the Established Church, and to degrade that of all other parties. It was exultingly affirmed that they had received episcopal ordination, in an unbroken line from the apostles, and that they were the "called" and the "sent of God," to preach the gospel; whilst, on the other hand, "dissenting teachers," as they were styled, were "uncalled" and "unauthorised." Dissenting ministers were represented as guilty of the most flagrant presumption in attempting to preach the gospel; while the people were spoken of as fools and enthusiasts in going to

hear them. In some cases it was strongly insinuated, and in others broadly asserted, that there was no salvation *out of* the Church; which plainly means that those who attended a dissenting ministry had no ground to expect anything but wrath and indignation as their future portion! No priests of Rome could have claimed a higher authority, or have spoken more contemptuously of others, than these Puseyite writers and preachers did of the dissenting ministry. Nor is this proud, anathematising spirit by any means extinguished. The pulpits of the Establishment, in numerous cases, still resound with this insolent twaddle, to the great annoyance of the more liberal and intelligent portion of their congregations.

And what was the result of all this roaring and fulmination about the evils of dissent? Did it stop its progress? Did dissenters multiply the less for it? Were there fewer chapels built, or fewer schools established, on account of all this noise and bluster? Rather, we may say, did not these things go on at an increased ratio? Did not dissenters, of every section of the Church, continue to multiply on every hand, despite all the bitter and uncharitable things that were said against them? It is well known

they did; nor is there any just ground for supposing that their future course will be less rapid and triumphant. The history of dissenters in England is something like that of the Israelites in Egypt; the more *they* were *oppressed*, the more they *multiplied;* and so, the more dissenters have been calumniated and vilified, the more they have increased.

Here let us a pause for a moment or two, to inquire into the reason of all this. Why have all these torrents of insult and abuse been poured upon their heads? Why have they so often been branded as fools and fanatics? Why has the English language been exhausted, to find terms of reproach and contempt to cast upon them? Why have newspaper writers and magazine contributors appeared to vie with each other in holding them up to the scorn and derision of the world? Why have the sacred desk and the sacred hours of the Sabbath been employed to stigmatize their characters, and to misrepresent their principles and motives? With all sincerity I ask, What reason can be *assigned* for all this? What have they done? "Whose ox have they taken? or whose ass have they taken? or whom have they de-

frauded?" Have they, at any time, shown themselves to be factious and disorderly, disloyal to the throne, or disaffected to the Government? Can any of these things be laid to their charge? I trow not.

Now let us look at the contrary,—let us see if the dissenters of England have not wrought an incalculable amount of *good*. They have cheerfully supported their ministers by their own voluntary offerings; they have erected and maintained their places of worship, without a farthing of expense to the State; they have built chapels in destitute localities, where no man seemed to care for the souls of the people; they have gathered multitudes into the house of God, who were previously wandering in the paths of vice and misery; they have been the unflinching advocates of education—both secular and religious; in a word, they have shown themselves the friends of humanity in a hundred different ways. I question if there is a benevolent institution in the land, supported by voluntary offerings, to which they have not contributed, whether it be an asylum for the blind, or a home for the destitute orphan, or a dispensary for the sick, or a mechanics' institution, or anything else. In fact,

it is known to the wide world, that they have shown the most expansive benevolence, caring both for the bodies and the souls of men at the same time. But their charities do not end here: they have not been confined to their own country,—foreign lands have largely shared in their sympathy and munificence. They have contributed hundreds of thousands, yea millions, to missionary societies, that the gospel might be carried to the perishing heathen. The Bible Society—that noble and godlike institution—has always found in them a friend and an advocate. Religious tracts and small books have been circulated by them to an almost unlimited extent. And I presume it would be difficult to point to any enterprise, designed for the benefit of the nation or the world, in which the dissenters were not found willing to co-operate.

Well, if these things be so, and no candid man would dare to dispute them, then comes the question again, Why have they been so stigmatised and contemned? Why has the language of insult and abuse been lavished upon them, as though they had been the instigators of every crime—as though they had been the very enemies of all righteousness? What has given rise to all these unchristian

tempers and feelings toward them? I answer, most unhesitatingly, *The Church and State system.* Yes, beyond a doubt, it was the Establishment system which engendered this anti-Christian spirit. The advocates of that system could not endure a *rival,* and they *saw* a rival in the dissenting body of this kingdom, and one of no mean or despicable character. When this dissenting body was small and weak—when it was a baby, so to speak, the Church Establishment, more especially the High Church party, looked upon it with disdain—very much as Goliath looked upon the stripling David; but, as it gradually grew up to youth and manhood, as it steadily progressed toward its present dimensions, it awakened in their bosom the most unhallowed passions and tempers; they looked upon the progress of the dissenting community with hatred, contempt, and all uncharitableness; and they would have crushed it to atoms long since, had it been in their power. The Church, as by law established, has always plumed itself as being the only legitimate guide and instructor of the people in religious matters; they could not, therefore, endure the thought of so many rival teachers springing up in every parish,—it was too much to be borne

with anything like patience; and we may be sure they have wished them all at *Botany Bay*, a thousand times over; but how to get them conveyed thither, was a question not so easily settled.

Some of my readers might be disposed to ask, "But why should the established clergy of this land be so dreadfully annoyed, so completely put out of temper, by the increase of dissenters? Even had they increased to a much greater extent than they have, their *temporalities* would not have been affected; their tithes and glebes and parsonages would have remained the same." I grant you all this; I grant you that *their* incomes were not likely to be affected by these things,—or, if affected at all, only in a small degree. Still, there would be various considerations, connected with the increase of dissent, calculated to awaken angry and unhallowed passions. However safe and secure they might think themselves, they could not feel the same confidence for the next generation; it was almost impossible for them not to see that the continued multiplication of dissenters was bringing the Established Church into danger. Reflecting men would see that it was doing this

in two ways: first, because it was showing the Legislature the mighty power of the voluntary principle, and convincing them (if anything will convince them) that a State Church is not necessary for the propagation of Christianity in the land; and secondly, because it was increasing the influence of dissenters with the Government, and thus hastening on the final separation of Church and State. If they thought of these things at all, it would naturally excite the warmest indignation.

But, without anticipating such important consequences as these, there was quite sufficient, in the multiplication of dissenting chapels and worshippers, to excite the ire of the clergy, and to call forth expressions of their unqualified hatred and contempt. If they felt quite satisfied they were in no danger of losing their *tithes* and *glebes*, they could not but see that they were losing their influence and their honours. Take the case of one located in a parish of three or four thousand souls. For a while, perhaps, the people bow to him, and acknowledge him alone as their spiritual overseer and guide. They have no other. But what a change may come over that parish in a few years! Wesleyans, Independents, Baptists, each and all

may erect a place of worship. The half or two-thirds of the parishioners may become stated hearers and supporters of these places: such has been the case in a great number of instances. Well, now, mark the altered position of this said clergyman. It is true he retains his office and his emoluments; and he is still, according to law, the minister of the *parish*, but he is no longer the minister of the *people*, or only of that portion of the people who attend his ministry, and desire his private visits and ministrations. He cannot be the pastor and teacher of those who have placed themselves under the guidance and superintendence of others; and they no more regard him as such than if he lived a thousand miles away from them. When the people have got religious teachers of their own providing and supporting, they naturally become indifferent to all others, and the clergy have not been unmoved spectators of these things. It has mortified them to the quick, to see other men introduced into their parishes, and in various ways invested with the same honours as themselves. These remarks, we presume, are sufficient to show that Church Establishments, *from their very nature*, are calculated to produce an anti-Christian spirit.

I have already intimated that a certain class of writers and preachers have been much in the habit of speaking contemptuously of the *dissenting ministry*. They have repeatedly affirmed that "dissenting ministers had no authority from God to preach the gospel." I have no hesitation in saying that it can be shown, by indisputable facts, that they *have* had authority from God to preach the gospel. They can show that the blessing of God has rested on their labours to an extraordinary degree; and that success must be the *highest proof* of their authority. They have been instrumental in winning multitudes of souls to Christ, and of helping others forward on their way to the kingdom. They take no praise to themselves for all this. They simply say, they have been the *instruments* in the hands of God of accomplishing these things. They have faithfully and earnestly preached His word, and He has accompanied it with His blessing. Could they have a stronger proof of their authority to preach the gospel than the *blessing* of God resting on their labours? Can their calumniators bring forward proofs, equally solid and substantial, that *they* were ever called of God to *the* ministry? 'Tis well, indeed, for them if

they can. If the dissenting ministers of England were called upon to *prove* that they have been authorized of God to proclaim His truth, they may point to the tens and hundreds of thousands of real Christians, scattered over the kingdom, and say, in the language of the apostle, "*The seal of our ministry are these in the Lord.*" Yes, Jehovah has fixed the broad seal of His approbation on their labours, by making them instrumental in turning multitudes to righteousness, as well as edifying and comforting His own children: and if an angel had been sent from heaven to proclaim the validity of their ministry, it could not have been more clearly and fully demonstrated.

Now let the reader observe, that the men whom God has thus honoured, whose ministry He has made so successful in gathering so many wandering sheep into the fold of Christ,—these are the very men who, in a special manner, have been held up to the scorn and derision of the world; whose characters have been loaded with insult and abuse; who have been charged with the grossest fanaticism for their dissent, and with the highest presumption in having obtruded themselves into the ministry—"unqualified" and "uncalled." And by whom have

they been so maligned and contemned? Was it by the apostate communion of Rome? Was it only by popish priests and cardinals? Certainly not. That would have been no matter of surprise; they expected no better treatment from them. But, "Oh tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon," they have been thus vilified and insulted by men calling themselves *Protestants*. Yes, by ministers and members of the Church established by law. Their sermons, pamphlets, and newspaper articles, for the last thirty or forty years, have been full of the most vituperative and abusive language toward the dissenters of this kingdom. Can we have a stronger proof that "Church Establishments are productive of an anti-Christian spirit?"

It is the more strange that these things should have happened in a country which possesses *liberty of conscience*. In this Christian land, all parties—I will not say are *tolerated*, for I detest the very word—in this land, all parties are *protected* by the State in the exercise of their natural rights. In all religious matters men are left to judge and act according to the dictates of their own conscience. They are at

perfect liberty, not only to think for themselves but to proclaim to others, through the pulpit and the press, those principles which they believe to be most in harmony with "the oracles of God;" and it is simply because they have exercised those rights, that they have been looked upon and treated by high-churchmen as the very offscouring of the earth.

Time was, when for men to propagate their own principles was considered a crime against the *State*, and it was punished by fines, imprisonment, and death. Since liberty of conscience was granted *by* the State, it has been considered a crime against the State religion,—in other words, against the Established Church; and it has been punished by obloquy, scorn, derision, and contempt; by the application of the most abusive epithets that the English language could supply. Thus you see how all these bad passions have been called forth. In consequence of the great increase of dissenters of late years, these unholy tempers are somewhat hushed and subdued; but they will, ever and anon, break forth, so long as Church and State hang together. We are not at all surprised at these things; it can hardly be otherwise: the system has a direct tendency to foster

every unchristian temper and disposition—these are its natural fruits and effects, the fruits springing from a corrupt tree. And if it can be shown, as I think it has been clearly demonstrated, that Church Establishments are productive of an unchristian spirit, we can have no stronger proof that their origin is not Divine.

The more we look at the spirit engendered by the Church and State system, and that inculcated by our Lord and His apostles, the more we see how directly opposed they are to each other. The spirit of Christianity is the spirit of LOVE: from first to last, it is a religion of love. It displays the matchless love of God to man in all its heights and depths, lengths and breadths, raising him up from the ruins of the fall, and fitting him for the glories of the celestial world. This is what Christianity reveals *to* us. And what does it demand *from* us? It demands love in return,—supreme love to God, and sincere love to men. This is what it requires at our hands; and without this twofold love, whether we be churchmen or dissenters, all our religion is a vain and empty show; without this, we are but "as sounding brass or a *tinkling* cymbal."

There is a special command, which our Lord inculcates on those who profess to be His disciples: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." And again He says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, when ye have love one toward another." Does this simply mean that we are to love those of our own party or denomination? Certainly not; that is *sectarian*, not Christian, love. The apostle shows us clearly what our Saviour meant, when he says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." When shall the world see professing Christians, of all parties, manifesting this spirit of love toward each other? I cannot stay to enlarge on this interesting subject; but I will just ask one question, "Does the Establishment system tend to *foster* the real spirit of Christian love, or to *repress* it? I leave it to each individual reader to answer the question for himself.

I shall give one particular illustration of the anti-Christian spirit produced by the Church and State system, for the purpose of showing that it creates prejudices and feelings which militate against the best interests of churchmen themselves. In numerous cases they continue,

year after year, attending the parish church, just because it *is* the church, and not because of any *benefit* they derive from it. They know full well that the officiating minister is not what he ought to be; and they know still more, that his *sermons* are not what they ought to be,—they know that they are often dry and meagre, and that, if there be not much to condemn, there is seldom much to approve. In a word, they know there is a great want of the vital elements of Christianity—a great want of the soul-stirring, heart-cheering doctrines and principles of the gospel. Knowing all this, they sit at their firesides grumbling and complaining by the hour together, almost wishing the Sabbath would never come.

But, notwithstanding all this, *they still go.* And why do they continue to go, under such painful circumstances? Is it because they have no alternative, no refuge to flee to? Is it because there is no place, within comfortable reach of their own dwelling, where they could hear the genuine truths of the gospel proclaimed, and their souls be refreshed and benefitted? No! no such thing. Perhaps there are two or three places, within five *minutes'* walk of their own habitation, where

they could hear the gospel in all its purity and simplicity. But then these places do not belong to the Establishment—they are dissenting chapels ; and they cannot *think* of hearing the gospel outside the pale of the Established Church ; they would rather *starve* their souls, from week to week, than have the bread of life presented to them in an unconsecrated building, and by the hand of a dissenting minister! "O my God, when will this age of darkness, prejudice, and superstition pass away? When will my countrymen cease to act in direct violation of all the dictates of reason, Scripture, and common sense?" These prejudices, and the baneful effects that follow them, are among the precious fruits of the Church and State system.

Let not churchmen imagine that they are honouring God by such a course of conduct. If a man prefer the forms of the Church service to any other, and he can hear the gospel within its walls, then, by all means, let him go. But, if he knows the gospel experimentally—if he has felt its power and tasted its sweetness; and if he knows also that what he is hearing from Sabbath to Sabbath is not the gospel, or but a very garbled form of it ; then, I say, that man

is dishonouring God, and robbing his own soul; he is acting in direct opposition to some of the plainest commands of God's most holy Word. Just listen, for a moment or two, to what that Word teaches on this subject.

Solomon says, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." This passage shows us that the truth is not to be sacrificed at any price. The great Teacher says, "Take heed what ye hear." Paul says, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Jude exhorts believers "To contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." John, in his Epistles, speaks pointedly and clearly about false prophets and teachers, and gives wise counsels accordingly; hear what he says (First Epistle, chap. iv.), "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; for many false prophets (or teachers) are gone out into the world." And in the Second Epistle he says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

All these passages appear plainly to teach that hearers of the Word, and especially those *who know the truth*, have a very important duty

to discharge; and that is, to encourage none, as ministers of God's Word, but those who maintain the vital and essential principles of Christianity. It is absolutely necessary they should observe these things, both for their own sake and for the sake of others. In some cases it might expose them to a little persecution, it might lose them some friends, and make them some enemies; but what of all that? What are all the friendships of this world compared with the smiles of God and the testimony of a good conscience? Hear the Master Himself speak once more: "If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me; and if any man love brother or sister more than me, he is not worthy of me; and if any man deny not himself, and take up his cross, and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." I leave these words, without note or comment, to the solemn and devout consideration of all those whom they may especially concern.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLAND LESS FAVOURABLE TO THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN LANDS THAN THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

THE history of Christianity is the most extraordinary history in the world. We behold twelve men, gathered chiefly from the humblest ranks of life, commissioned by the "great Teacher" to go and publish His gospel to all the nations of the earth. They knew full well that the religion they were commanded to propagate would be thoroughly obnoxious both to Jews and Gentiles, and that they themselves would be looked upon as the most infatuated and deluded of men. But, notwithstanding that these things appeared so much against them, they at once commenced their noble and splendid career. They began as they were taught—they began at Jerusalem. Peter was the first to lift up his voice and proclaim salvation to guilty men through the crucified

Nazarene. As the result of his first discourse, three thousand persons were laid prostrate in the dust; their prejudices, though deep-rooted and strong, were all vanquished in an hour; and they were heard crying out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" From Jerusalem the apostles went forth to other parts of Judea, to Samaria and Galilee; and thence to the idolatrous Gentile nations of the earth. Fresh victories awaited them whithersoever they went; for, within a very few years, multitudes became obedient to the faith, and in the face of a proud and persecuting world, avowed themselves the decided followers of the Lamb of God.

Passing by the intervening ages, let us come down to modern times. In our own day and generation, Christianity has been obtaining great and glorious victories. I refer now more especially to heathen countries and foreign lands. It has been making astonishing progress among the great nations and continents of the world, where, but a few years ago, the inhabitants were involved in midnight darkness, superstition, and spiritual death. By the labours of God's faithful servants in the mission-field, tens and hundreds of thousands of con-

verts have been gathered into the fold of Christ, from every rank and grade of society. These persons are now rejoicing in the glorious privileges of the gospel; and adorning their religious profession by "showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." But, gratifying as these things are, and grateful as we desire to feel for these tokens of the Divine favour; still, taking the Scriptures as our guide, we are taught to expect that far greater things than any we have yet witnessed, remain to be accomplished. A few passages from the inspired record may serve to set this matter in the clearest light.

"As I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with my glory. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. And the idols shall be utterly abolished. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for

ever and ever." These portions of the sacred volume are sufficient to teach us that the triumphs of the gospel are to be far more extended and glorious than anything the world has ever yet seen.

I now proceed to show, according to the title of this chapter, that "the Church Establishment of England is *less favourable* to the spread of the gospel in foreign lands than the voluntary principle." The question is not, Has the Church of England done *anything* for the spread of the gospel in foreign lands? That is not the question at all. The point we have to consider is this, Has the Church of England done for the extension of the gospel in foreign lands, anything like a fair proportion to the several bodies of Protestant dissenters of this kingdom, taking into account her special and peculiar advantages? This seems to me a perfectly fair and legitimate way of treating the subject, and of ascertaining whether the endowment system or the voluntary principle is the most favourable for the enlightenment and conversion of the heathen world.

It will be perfectly natural, in the first place, to state, so far as we may be able, what

the Established Church and the dissenters have done, and are doing, for the object we are now contemplating. According to the statistics of a printed paper, put into my hand a short time ago, it may be stated in round numbers as follows:— Church of England Societies for foreign objects, £300,000 per annum; dissenting communities for ditto, £320,000 ditto. I don't pretend to say that this is the *exact* amount in either case; but these figures approximate sufficiently near the truth for the present purpose; and they do something to show that the Establishment system is less favourable to the spread of the gospel in foreign lands than the voluntary principle; and this point will be presented to the reader in a still more convincing light, if he will attend to the following observations:—

If it could be clearly demonstrated that the Church of England was doing *quite as much* annually for missionary purposes as the various dissenting communities together; still, there remains an abundance of proof that the Establishment system is *much less* favourable to the object we are now contemplating than the opposite principle. I contend that the Church

of England not only ought to do *as much* for missionary objects as the dissenters combined, but she ought to do *a great deal more.* I shall give two reasons for this—first, because dissenters have a great deal to do for themselves at home, which the generality of churchmen have not. They have much to do in the way of building and repairing chapels, supporting ministers, and providing for incidentals of various kinds. It must cost them hundreds of thousands a year to do all this. On this ground, then, the Church ought to do a great deal more than they for foreign objects.

But this is not all; nay, it is not half. The Church is immensely *rich,* whilst dissenters are comparatively *poor.*

This is the *second* reason why she ought to do much more than they to spread the gospel in foreign lands. The dissenters can claim a few amongst them who might be called rich, and a goodly number in what are called "easy and comfortable circumstances;" but, beyond all question, the great bulk of them are poor. Now look at the other side. The Church boasts that she has within her walls all the aristocracy; that is, the men of large landed property, and of distinguished rank and title.

Then she claims to have within her pale a large proportion of the bankers, rich merchants, and respectable tradesmen. In addition to these, to say nothing of the army and navy, there is a multitude of officials, filling various stations under Government, most of whom claim connection with the State Church.

Now comes the testing point. With these unspeakable advantages on her side, with such immense stores of wealth at her command, and so little to do with it in a religious way for herself, *ought* she not to do, for the furtherance of the gospel in foreign lands, not only as much, but *a vast deal more*, than all the dissenters combined? Will any man, possessing the smallest degree of candour, deny this? Then, how comes it to pass that she does *not* do a great deal more than they for this important object? The reason, I imagine, is, because her connection with the State paralyzes her best feelings, and renders her almost insensible to all obligation. She is so little accustomed to do for herself, that she has *no heart* to do for others. Of course there are numerous exceptions to this rule; but we speak of the Church as a body, and the facts

of the case speak for themselves. That *very Church* which, by virtue of her vast resources, *ought* to be the most forward and active in sending the gospel to heathen lands, is the most *lukewarm, sluggish,* and *apathetic.* As we have said before, her connection with the State chills and benumbs her moral sensibilities; instead of rousing her to exertion, it acts as an opiate, and lulls her to sleep. We say, then, that the Church Establishment of England is *less* favourable to the extension of the gospel in foreign lands than the voluntary principle. The facts and figures produced in this chapter, prove it to a demonstration. If, then, you want the gospel to flourish abroad, *get rid* of the endowment system at home. When the Episcopal Church becomes severed from the State, and has to depend on her own resources for support, I verily believe she will soon do more for the spread of the gospel in foreign climes, than she does now with all her wealth and advantages.

The fact of the Church of England having such vast resources at her command, and doing *comparatively* so little with them for missionary objects, is a truth that tells most powerfully

against the Establishment system, and implies a great deal more than would appear at first sight. This fact, so palpably plain and clear that no one can deny it, would naturally give rise to a very weighty question, which is this, How is it, and why is it, that the voluntary system should be so much more productive of missionary zeal and enterprise than the endowment system? In other words, How is it that the dissenters of England, whose means are so *vastly* inferior to those of the Established Church, should actually do more for the spread of the gospel in foreign lands than the Church herself?

No doubt this mystery may be very naturally and easily explained. The dissenters of England, as a body, are very particular in selecting the right sort of men for the ministry; they admit none but really converted men, if they know it. This being the case, there is more real gospel truth proclaimed in their pulpits than in those of the Established Church; I mean, of course, taking them as a whole; and this is a fact as well known among intelligent persons, as any of the established laws of nature. Then, as there is more gospel truth in the pulpit, it is natural to suppose there would be more religion in the *pew*—more vital godliness among the people.

And that this really *is* the case, is manifest by their showing more of the true missionary spirit; for that is an important part of real, practical piety. Those who have the glorious doctrines of the gospel preached to them every Sabbath day, and who experience the power and sweetness of true religion in their hearts—those are the people to feel compassion for the perishing heathen, and to be stimulated to employ their wealth and influence in extending the Redeemer's kingdom to the ends of the earth. We are far from thinking that the dissenters do all that they *could*, or all that they *ought*, for the diffusion of the gospel abroad; but the clear, palpable, naked fact that they do more in reality, and *a vast deal more in proportion to their means*, than the endowed Episcopal Church, is a clear, demonstrative proof that the Church Establishment of England is less favourable to the spread of Christianity in foreign lands than the voluntary principle: and that is the point we set out to prove.

I think it must be perfectly evident, from the preceding remarks, that the reason, and the only reason, why we have so little of the missionary spirit in the established Church is just this,—because there is so little evangelical

doctrine in the pulpit, and, as a consequence of that, so little of the power of true godliness among the people. Did they but hear more of the truth as it is in Jesus, and feel more of the Saviour's love in their hearts, they would be far more anxious that He should be proclaimed to a perishing world. The Church Establishment of England, weighed in the balances, is found wanting,—wanting in heartfelt piety and devotedness to God; wanting, to a fearful extent, of that zealous, loving, missionary *spirit* which ought to distinguish every Church and every Christian in the world. Instead of doing *much more* to evangelize the nations, than the dissenters of this kingdom, she is actually doing *less*. Taking into account her immense wealth, her almost boundless resources, the offerings she lays on the missionary altar are PALTRY AND CONTEMPTIBLE, and such as she ought to be perfectly ashamed of. Nor is she likely to be materially improved, so long as she remains in her present degraded position—that is, so long as she remains in bondage to the State. She must arise, and shake herself from the dust. She must assert her own freedom and independence. She must cease from being under the government of worldly men. She must exer-

cise a more direct control in the appointment of her ministers. All these things she must do; and then glorious results will follow: Christ will be more fully preached, vital religion will be increased among the people, a missionary *spirit* will be awakened, and she will come forward cheerfully and vigorously to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

There is one important practical conclusion to which we are imperatively drawn by the previous statements. It is this: If the voluntary principle produces more activity and zeal, more sympathy and compassion for the souls of the perishing heathen, than the endowment system, then, every candid person must be constrained to acknowledge that the voluntary system *must* be the best. That must be the best system which yields the most fruit. Let any honest man try the two systems by this test, and we have no fear as to the conclusion to which he must come; and there is no way of judging of them, fairly and impartially, but by their practical results.

There is a class of writers and preachers which are everlastingly praising and extolling the Established Church, as the very acme of all

perfection, calling it, "Our excellent and venerable Establishment," and by many other flattering titles. Now, as this is so frequently the case, would it not be well in future if these writers and preachers, instead of using these high-sounding words, would show us more of the fruits of Christian piety and zeal which it produces? When they can bring forth facts to prove that those who support the Church and State system are doing more to spread the gospel on the great continents of this world, than those who advocate the voluntary principle, and more *in proportion* to their vast resources; when, I say, they can *do* this, they will have something like a justifiable ground for the extravagant eulogiums they are constantly pronouncing on their favourite institution; but until they *can* do this, let them, for their own credit's sake, cease to laud and extol a system that has done comparatively so little for a perishing world.

Having now shown, with sufficient clearness, that the Church Establishment of England is less favourable to the progress of the gospel in heathen countries than the voluntary principle, I shall endeavour to establish another point, most intimately connected with it; viz., that

such institutions are quite irreconcilable with the general diffusion of Christianity throughout the world. What I mean is this, You cannot reasonably entertain the idea of such institutions being brought into existence in any of those great nations and empires, where missionary operations are now being carried on. I think this is an important consideration, and one that is very closely identified with the general question discussed in these pages. I will try to make it perfectly clear to the humblest capacity; but we must take a pretty wide and general view of the subject, in order to come at our point.

We live in an age of missionary zeal and enterprise. Something more than sixty years ago, the Christian Church awoke from her slumbers. The various religious denominations of which that Church is composed, were wonderfully stirred up to engage in the important and glorious work of seeking to evangelize the heathen world. In a few years every leading Protestant denomination had its Missionary Society established, and its agents busily at work. Since these operations commenced, the agents of these various societies have vastly multiplied, and have been most honourably and usefully employed. A large amount of practical

good has resulted from their combined operation. Not only has religious knowledge been diffused, social habits formed, and the general condition of the people improved, but thousands upon thousands have been brought to a saving acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus. They have altogether renounced their idolatry, cordially embraced the gospel, made a public profession of their faith by becoming members of Christian Churches, and are adorning their profession to an extent that would do honour to the inhabitants of the most enlightened country on the face of the earth. These blessed results have been obtained, not by one society alone, but, more or less, by them all. By the Church Missionary Society, the London, the Wesleyan, the Baptist, the Moravian, the Presbyterian, and various others. The blessing of God has rested upon all honest and sincere endeavours to spread His truth through the world. Then there is another fact to be kept in mind, which will shortly bring us to the main point of our argument. It must be carefully observed, that most of these societies are labouring in the *same field.* Not the agents of one society in China, of another in India, of a third in Africa, of a *fourth in* Polynesia, and so on; but most of these

societies have their agents in each of these countries, and there is abundance of room for them if they were multiplied a hundredfold.

Well, now, what is it that I have undertaken to prove? It is this: "That Church Establishments are irreconcilable with the general diffusion of Christianity throughout the world." You cannot reasonably associate the one idea with the other. In order to illustrate this point in the clearest possible manner, let us look at one great field of missionary enterprise by itself. We will take China. In this vast field, the agents of some half-dozen societies are now at work; a foundation, deep and broad, has been laid for evangelizing the country; important results have already been realized, and we are now anticipating a rich and glorious harvest. These agents are supported by the voluntary contributions of the people of Great Britain and America; and they must continue to be supported in the same way for a long time to come; there is no other way of carrying on the work. By-and-by the people themselves will, no doubt, assist; still, it will be the same principle in operation; nor can we rationally conceive of any other system being called into exercise.

Let us now suppose that, by the end of the present century, these missionary agents have been instrumental in bringing together, and forming into religious societies, hundreds of thousands of people; and all this, of course, accomplished by means of the voluntary principle. Well, what is to be done then? What is to be done in China, forty years hence? Is the gospel, after that, *still* to be carried on upon the same principle, or are we to have a Church Establishment set up? From that time are we to have one of the existing denominations endowed and supported by the State? In reply to these important questions, a strenuous advocate of the Church and State system might be disposed to say, "Most likely by that time, forty years hence, a Church Establishment of some kind would be brought into operation; most likely by that time the mass of the people would be so far enlightened as to see that such an institution would be of great national advantage." Then, for the sake of argument, we will suppose that, by that time, the Episcopalian party were resolved to make the attempt; that they had the assurance to make an application to the legislature, for the purpose of bringing about a *union* of Church and State. As every-

body knows, or ought to know, the connecting link between Church and State is—MONEY. Of course, they would ask for money to build, or to assist in building, their churches, parsonage-houses, and schools; and then, probably, they would ask for endowments of land for the maintenance of their ministers, and other incidental expenses.

In making this application for State patronage and support, they would use all their ingenuity in trying to convince the Government of the great advantages that would result from such a connection; that, having granted certain endowments to the Churches, they could take the patronage into their own hands, and make it subservient to a variety of State purposes. Such, we presume, would be the kind of argument employed to carry their point. And would not this be a very plausible scheme to a man of High Church principles? Most undoubtedly it would. But, should such an attempt *ever* be made, are we quite sure it would succeed? I think we may be quite sure that it would *not*, and that for two very weighty reasons: first, because it is not certain that a majority of the legislature would be favourably disposed to

such a proposition; and, secondly, because if they *were* favourable, there would soon be a powerful opposition against it.

It is quite possible, and not at all improbable, that a majority of the Chinese Government might be perfectly *hostile* to any such measure. They might have the good sense to perceive that it would be an act of gross injustice to other denominations, who were supporting themselves by the voluntary principle, and as such, calculated to create strife and discord among those who ought to live in harmony and peace together. In addition to this, they might have learnt that Church Establishments had worked most injuriously to the interests of religion, in countries where they had long prevailed; and, for that reason, feel no disposition to try them in their own dominions. Should that prove to be the case, then, this plausible scheme for setting up a State Church in China would be quashed at once; nor would there be the least ground to hope that any future efforts in that direction, would be more successful.

But, secondly: Suppose the bulk of the Chinese House of Commons were strongly inclined to such a measure, would not the moot*ing of the* question in that House at once rouse

the indignation of all the other Churches in the land? Most assuredly it would; it would be the signal for the most powerful and determined opposition. The pulpit, the platform, and the press, would all protest against it. Public meetings would instantly be called; and petitions, signed by tens and hundreds of thousands, would storm the legislature from every quarter. The fact is just this, such a monstrously absurd proposition would at once be put down, and the legislators themselves would be compelled, as it were, to make a very polite apology to the public, for having obtruded a measure on their attention, so repugnant to all their best feelings.

What conclusion, then, do we draw from these reasonings and suppositions? A conclusion of vast and unspeakable importance. It is this, "That as the evangelization of China *began* upon the voluntary principle, so it must *go on* upon the same principle, because no other would be tolerated; and if so carried in China, then, the same in India, in Africa, and throughout all the great nations and continents of the globe." From what has now been advanced, it must be abundantly evident that Church Establishments are quite *irreconcilable* with the

general diffusion of Christianity throughout the world; and that is the point we engaged to prove. As the gospel has been introduced into foreign lands by the voluntary principle, so, by the same principle it must be continued through successive generations, for no other would be sanctioned where the people had the least control over the Government, and no other is needed; it is all-sufficient. It triumphed in the first ages, when it had the most powerful opposition to encounter; and it will triumph again in the last ages, when the schemes and devices of men are buried in eternal oblivion.

I proceed to ask, Do not these facts and reasonings bear immediately upon the question of Church Establishments at home? If the voluntary principle has already done so much for the propagation of the gospel in heathen countries, and if it be destined to do so much more in the ages to come, shall we be gravely told that it is not sufficient for England? Shall we be told that a Church Establishment is necessary for the propagation of the gospel in our own land, while the world at large is destined to do without these things? Is not the supposition most chimerical and absurd? We are quite *sure* England *could* do without it, *ought* to do

without it, and, ere long, *must* do without it. Before many years have rolled away, I believe multitudes of churchmen will be brought to acknowledge that it will be for their *interest* to do without it. There is every probability they will be brought to address the rulers of this land in language tantamount to the following:—"We do not deem it necessary for you to provide us with religious teachers any longer; we would rather provide our own ministers, and pay them ourselves. We provide everything else, and why not them? We provide our own food and raiment, our habitations, our lawyers, our doctors, etc., etc., and surely we can afford to pay the men who are to preach to us the everlasting gospel, to visit us in our own afflictions, and to watch over our eternal interests. Yes, we both *can* and *will* do these things; and then we will take care to have men of the right stamp—men who know the truth experimentally, who will preach the gospel to us in all its fulness, and who will rejoice to help us on our way to a brighter and better world."

What a blessed thing it will be when churchmen generally shall be brought to such a conclusion as this; when they shall be determined

to throw off all State patronage and control; and to provide themselves with such pastors and teachers as they shall thoroughly and heartily approve! Were the pulpits of the Episcopal Church generally filled with enlightened, zealous, and devoted men, we might expect showers of blessings to come down on the people, and vital godliness to be far more predominant among them. We might then expect a revival of true religion throughout the length and breadth of the land. That revived state of religion would manifest itself in various works of mercy, and in no way more than in renewed activity and zeal in the cause of CHRISTIAN MISSIONS. Men would not only pray "that God's kingdom might come, and His saving health be experienced among all nations," but they would feel they were laid under the deepest obligation to contribute of their substance for the attainment of that blessed object. And when that Church shall once be baptized with the true missionary spirit, what glorious things may we not hope to see accomplished! Instead of a quarter of a million, or a little more, being raised to send the gospel all over the world, the probability is that that sum would be doubled *and trebled* in the course of a very few years.

There are three considerations which ought to stimulate all parties to greater zeal and devotedness in the missionary enterprise: the first is, that multitudes are still without the "light of life;" souls are daily perishing for lack of knowledge. The second is, that our opportunities of usefulness will soon be brought to a close; "the night cometh, when no man can work." The third is, that each of us will shortly be called to give an account of our stewardship.

Let us keep in mind that it was for the renovation of our lost and ruined race our blessed Saviour came down from heaven, suffered and died on the accursed tree; that it is for this object that all the machinery of nature is kept in motion from one generation to another; and that the sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth is making all the great changes and revolutions of empires subservient to the same grand and glorious purpose. Let us work without intermission, and pray without ceasing, for the missionary cause; then shall we be prepared to join with the poet, and sing,—

"Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease:
May Thy lasting, wide dominion
Multiply, and still increase:
Sway Thy sceptre,
Saviour, all the world around."

CHAPTER VII.

THE POSITION OF GOOD MEN IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLAND.

THE reader will at once understand that by "good men," in the title of this chapter, we mean good *ministers*. We are not going to speak just now of the *laity* of the Established Church, but of those who serve at her altars. The clergy, as a body, like the people themselves, consist of two classes—the carnal and the spiritual. By the *carnal* clergy we understand those who are strangers to vital, experimental religion—those who have never experienced a real change of heart. These, of course, have taken upon themselves the ministerial office for carnal motives; for unconverted men cannot do otherwise; they have taken this office upon them in order to enjoy the honours and emoluments of the Church—that is their supreme end and aim. But now let us turn to the other class. By the *spiritual* clergy we understand those whose hearts have been changed by the *grace of* God, who have cordially believed in

Christ as their Saviour; who have devoted themselves entirely to God's service; and who, by faithfully preaching the gospel, are seeking to advance the kingdom of our Lord, in the conversion and salvation of men.

It by no means follows that all those spiritually-minded men should hold *exactly* the same religious opinions,—we are sure they do not. Some of them are inclined to Calvinistic views, and even strongly; while others would plead for the contrary doctrine. Some of them are zealous Millenarians—that is, they contend earnestly for the *personal* reign of Christ on the earth; others would object to that view, and say, "He reigns in the hearts of His people, and will reign in no other way." Some would argue that faith in Christ means an *assurance* of our salvation; others contend (more correctly, as we think,) that faith means simple trust in Christ *for* salvation, and that the assurance comes afterward. And so there may be other minor points on which the spiritual clergy differ. But, after all, there is a very marked and substantial agreement among them, —they all contend for the cardinal and essential doctrines of the gospel; they contend for those grand principles of the Reformation.

which are usually styled "evangelical:" such as the ruin of man by sin—redemption by Christ—regeneration by the Spirit—and other collateral truths.

It does not follow that they all understood these things when they first entered the ministry, or that they were actuated by proper motives in taking this responsible office upon them. In some cases, those who are now enlightened, godly men, were in darkness at that time,—this they have frankly acknowledged; but God has had mercy on them, and brought them into His marvellous light: He has filled them with joy and peace in believing; and now they are labouring to win souls to Christ; to be instrumental in snatching them as brands from the burning, and in saving them with an everlasting salvation. The nonconformists of this kingdom greatly rejoice that the number of such men now in the Church of England is greater than at any former period; and they earnestly desire and pray that their labours may be abundantly blest in "turning many to righteousness."

But, while we admit the fact of these good men being in the Church, and shall rejoice in *any good* they may accomplish, we do not con-

sider this as a proof that Church Establishments are either right or necessary, and, therefore, that they ought to be perpetuated. We must be charitable enough to hope that there have been, and are still, good men among Roman Catholic priests—men who have trusted in and loved the Saviour, and who have laboured to bring others to trust and love Him too. But no sound Protestant would say that, on that account, we ought to be admirers and abettors of the Church of Rome; that we ought to believe in the power of the priesthood to forgive sins, in transubstantiation, in purgatory, and in all the superstitions and absurdities of the papal communion. Well, then, as there would be no weight in the argument on one side, so neither is there on the other. If we are not to be captivated and enslaved by the errors of Popery because a few good Christian men may have ministered at her altars; so neither, because we find good men ministering in the Established Church, are we to conclude that establishments are right, and that they ought to be continued to future generations. Church Establishments, like all other things, must stand or fall on their own merits; and if, in the pages of this book, they have not, to some good ex-

tent, been shown to be without any solid rational foundation, the writer will be very happy to learn in what way they can be scripturally and substantially vindicated.

I now proceed to show that the good men in the Established Church of this land are, as we think, in a very unnatural and unenviable *position*. I will preface this part of our subject by relating an anecdote. Some few years ago, the writer of these pages had occasion to call upon a clergyman in the North of England, with a small book, which he offered to him for sale. After a few words had passed, the clergyman, in a very lofty and imperious tone, said, "How can you think that I should read a book written by a dissenter?" To which the writer replied, "We are constantly in the habit of reading *your* books, sir, and it is a well-known fact that your people are in the daily practice of reading *ours*." The writer went on to say, "Look at the works of Mr. Jay, of Bath, and Mr. James, of Birmingham; you will find them in every hole and corner of the kingdom." The reverend gentleman then drew in a little, softened in his tone and manners, and replied as follows: "Yes, it may be so; no doubt Mr.

Jay and Mr. James were very amiable men, but I think they were in *a false position!*" Now, courteous reader, What do you think of this? Mr. Jay and Mr. James in a false position! Two of the most interesting writers and useful preachers of the age in a false position! Two Christian men, almost universally known, and beloved by all who did know them; "whose praise is in all the Churches," and whose works will probably live as long as time itself shall last; yet, according to the opinion of this learned ecclesiastic, these two honoured and distinguished servants of God were in a false position! Of course, he meant they were in a false position, because they were *not* in the Established Church. My opinion is, (and I am quite sure it is the opinion of great numbers besides,) that they would have been in a false position if they *had*. But what a pity it was that this clever Oxford divine had not come into the world fifty years sooner, that he might have put us all in the true and right position! Well, he has done one thing, though very unintentionally,—he has given me a text, and now I will try to preach from it. While I am far, very far, from thinking that the two honourable men just referred to were in a false po-

sition, I am decidedly of opinion that many ministers, or professed ministers, of the gospel really are so. I believe that all *carnal* ministers of religion are in a false position. I mean this, I fully believe that all those men who are strangers to the converting grace of God, and who have entered the ministry for their own worldly gains, are in a position which they ought never to have occupied. I feel quite sure that such men, whether found in the Church of England, or *any other Church*, were never called of God to the ministerial office. These men *must* be in a false position, for they do not possess the qualifications requisite for the office to which they have aspired.

But I come now to speak of the *spiritual* clergy, the good men in the Church of England, who, in several respects, as many *think*, are in a false position. I feel considerable reluctance to say anything that may seem to reflect on these good men, because we sincerely love and esteem them for their work's sake; but the interests of truth appear to demand that some notice should be taken of these matters. Well, what will be said of them will be nothing but *a statement* of facts, already before the world;

so that, after all, there can be no just cause for complaint. The dissenters of this kingdom, in general, think that these good men are in a false position in using language in the Church services, which, in its plain, literal, grammatical sense, they do not believe.

We glance first at the *baptismal* service. We feel quite sure that the book teaches the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, if it teaches *anything;* and multitudes of their own Church contend that such is the *real import* of the words. But these good men do not pretend to believe such a doctrine,—they cannot; they see it practically contradicted by facts every day. Now I have a very solemn question to ask respecting this matter. Whatever may be the construction they put on the language employed in that service, would they *use* that language, in the administration of baptism, if they were not *required* to do so by the laws of the Church? I feel quite sure they would not; and, consequently, I think they are in a false position in using language which they do not, and can not, heartily approve.

Then, again, I think they are in a false position when called upon to sanction the *con-*

firmation service, as it is termed. Is there not language used in that service which they are far from approving? and would not some of them be glad if it were dispensed with altogether? And well they might; for what is it but a mere popish ceremony, and nothing else? And now let the reader carefully observe what takes place at the close of this engagement. These confirmed persons,—consisting mainly, perhaps, of a number of giddy, thoughtless creatures, who look upon the day more as a *gala* day than anything else—these persons, one and all, are invited to attend the Lord's table the next sacramental Sabbath. In this way they are led to believe that now they must be Christians indeed, and in a fair way for the kingdom. Can anything in the world be more calculated to blind and delude the souls of men? And yet the clergy—the spiritual and enlightened clergy—must give their sanction to all this! Are they not really and truly in a false position?

Perhaps some of my readers might be ready to say, "Well, we certainly read about confirmation in the New Testament; what do the Scriptures teach us on this subject? we should *greatly* like to know." It will give the writer

the highest pleasure to set this subject before you, in all its apostolic purity and simplicity. It is said in the Acts of the Apostles (xv. 47), "And he (that is, Paul) went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches." This is a beautiful text, and fraught with the most important instruction. In considering the passage, you will observe two things—The persons *confirmed*, and the confirmation *itself*. First, as to the persons, Who were they? The text says, "The Churches." Well, these Churches, as in all other cases, consisted of persons professing godliness; that is, they were persons who professed to be the subjects of repentance towards God, of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to have consecrated their hearts and lives to His glory. Moreover, by their general walk and conversation, they were giving reasonable evidence that their profession was really genuine; that they were serving the Lord in sincerity and truth. What a different class of persons *this* to the ignorant and giddy multitude who come to our parish churches to be confirmed! Are you not struck with the contrast there is between them?

The next thing to be considered is, the Confirmation itself. "Paul went through

Syria and Cilicia, *confirming* the Churches." And how did he do this? Was it by offering a prayer, and then laying his hands upon them? That he offered many earnest prayers for them there can be no doubt, but we have nothing in the narrative about "laying on of hands;" not a word of it—that is a mere human device, a figment of Popery. Then the question returns, How did he confirm them? I answer, By preaching the gospel to them, and conversing with them about their eternal interests. No doubt he preached the gospel to them in all its glory and fulness; in all its precious doctrines, precepts, and promises. By this means they were confirmed in their Christian principles, and stimulated in their Christian course. They were confirmed in their *belief* of the vital truths of Christianity—in their *assurance* of an interest in the blood of the cross—in their *hopes* of immortal glory—in their *love* to the Saviour—and in their *purpose of heart* to cleave to Him and to serve Him all the days of their life. Now, gentle reader, this is real, scriptural confirmation, such as really takes place every time the gospel is faithfully preached, and the saints of God are really edified. But how different all this

to the mere ceremony called Confirmation practised in the Established Church of this country! And when the evangelical clergy, who profess to know, and who do know, what real experimental religion is; when they give their countenance and sanction to this popish rite, and to the circumstances that follow, must they not *feel* that they are in a false position? I do not see how it can be otherwise. It is a position which some of us would not occupy for any bribe that could be offered.

I must now touch on another point, in which I also think they are in a false position: I refer to the administration of the Lord's Supper to dying characters. I object to this *private* administration for two reasons: First, because I see no sanction for it in the New Testament. It was an ordinance observed when the Church—that is, the disciples residing in one place—were gathered together. But I object to it mainly on *this* ground, That I think it fosters a spirit of delusion. I believe the reason why so many are anxious to have it is, because they think it will *prepare them for eternity;* and the common practice of giving it to dying persons has produced this very

general impression. But, whenever it is so viewed, is it not a *fearful delusion?* Can all the sacraments in the world save a soul from the second death? Can anything prepare a soul for eternity, but a real change of heart, godly sorrow for sin, a simple trust in Christ, and a genuine love to spiritual things? We are sure it cannot. When, therefore, the sacrament is administered to persons destitute of these things, what is it but sealing a delusion on their minds, and sending them out of the world "with a lie in their right hand?" When pious clergymen are asked to administer this rite to dying persons, whom they strongly suspect are destitute of all real godliness, and are compelled by law to give it to them, must they not tremble lest they should be helping to *deceive* those individuals? Must they not feel that they are in a false position? Sometimes, when I hear of certain dying characters having had the sacrament, who never made the least pretensions to religion, it almost makes my blood chill through my veins.

These remarks naturally bring me to another point of great importance, and that is, the *burial* service; and surely we may say, in

reference to this matter, that the spiritual clergy are in a false position. Many of them prove that they feel it to be so, by the applications they are making for an alteration of the language.

No one objects to the burial service, so far as real Christians are concerned; it was doubtless designed for them—and, considered in reference to them, is very beautiful. But to think of applying it indiscriminately to all sorts of characters, is a gross absurdity. Perhaps it would be said, "It would not have done to have had two services, one for the godly and another for the ungodly." I grant it; but a service might have been composed which would have been appropriate in all cases. In my humble opinion, the most suitable thing to be used at the grave-side would be something like this:—A solemn address to the people, concluded with a short prayer. First, a short, pithy, pointed address, something to remind the people of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the necessity of living in a state of habitual preparation for an eternal world. It should be something urging them to flee from the wrath to come, to rest on Christ as their only Saviour, to give their hearts to God, and to seek strength

and comfort from Him in all their troubles and sorrows. In a word, something calculated to rouse them from their apathy and worldliness, and to stimulate them to make the *salvation of the soul* the one great business of their life. This would be a proper burial service; but, instead of this, everything that is said is calculated to soothe, to flatter, and to lull men to sleep. How is it that the "heads of the Church," as they are called, do not look into this matter, and prepare a service that would be suitable for all occasions? It would be difficult to conceive how their time and abilities could be more profitably employed.

This, however, is somewhat of a digression; but I return to the point from which I seceded. My duty, just now, is to show that the godly ministers of the Church, in using the burial service, as it is, over all sorts of characters, are in a false position. What are the solemn words used in reference to the deceased? They are as follows:—"Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of His great mercy, to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." Then, after the Lord's

Prayer, the following language occurs :—"We give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world." This, of course, implies that He had taken him to Himself, as it is expressed in the former passage. These solemn words they pronounce, and must pronounce, on all occasions; not only in the case of those who had given evidence of real piety, or of those who had maintained a moral and blameless reputation, but over the grave of every drunken reprobate, every liar, swearer, or fornicator,—yes, over every licentious vagabond that dies in a parish! These things they say and do, not only over persons of whose characters they were profoundly *ignorant*, but over those whom they *knew* had been the most dissipated and abandoned,—but of whose repentance and faith they had never heard a single word. What is this but teaching the people that, whatever their lives may be, they will all go to heaven at last? I confess I am staggered beyond measure, to think how men, professing to have a regard for the claims of truth and conscience, can do these things. Can they reasonably believe that a God of infinite justice and purity can approve of such a line

of conduct? Is not the whole service, when pronounced over those reprobate and dissipated characters, a mockery and an insult? Would they, in many cases, use these solemn words if they could avoid it? We feel assured they would not. Then, are they not in a false position in sustaining office in a Church which compels them, on the most solemn occasions, to use language which they do not, and can not, heartily approve? They must feel that their position, with reference to all the things that I have mentioned, from the baptismal font to the grave, is one by no means to be envied. And this very conviction ought to constrain them to show more respect for those who would rather reject the honours and emoluments of the Church, than be constantly doing violence to the dictates of their own conscience.

Then, further, are not these enlightened, godly ministers in the Establishment in a false position with regard to many of those whom, by courtesy, they call their "*brethren?*" What sympathy, what real sympathy, have they with vast numbers who minister at the same altars? What sympathy have they with those whose whole life is a course of carnal pleasure, luxury, *and* worldly gratification? What sympathy

have they with those whose pulpit discourses are far more impregnated with the corrupt doctrines and ceremonies of *Rome,* than with the Epistles of Paul and Peter? Still more may we ask, What sympathy have they with the men whose preaching and writing savour more of *pagan philosophy* than of New Testament divinity; and whose works are more likely to lead men into all the meshes of infidelity, than to inspire them with a profound reverence for the oracles of God? What real sympathy can they have with any of the classes just mentioned? I should conceive, none whatever. And yet they are connected and associated with them. They are all ministers of one and the same Church; and are all patronised and supported by the State. But are they not in a false position, in being thus associated with men whose characters and principles, aims and objects, are so contrary to their own? If they meet together, as they must do occasionally, there is no reciprocal feeling, no friendly intercourse, no bond of brotherhood between them. They seem to me like rival parties, though meeting in the same camp; and each striving for power, preeminence, and ascendancy.

The sympathies of these good and holy men, to a great extent, are with the *dissenters;* not with those within the pale. They are one with us in all that is vital and essential to the Christian life. In all great matters, relating both to doctrine and experience, they and we are one. Just look at some of the points of agreement: they assert the total and universal depravity of human nature, so do we; they preach Christ crucified as the only foundation of the sinner's hope, so do we; they insist upon a real change of heart, by the direct power of the Holy Ghost, so do we; they exhort believers to abound in good works, as the fruits and evidences of a true faith, so do we; they contend that personal religion is necessary to *qualify* a man for the ministry, so do we. In short, they and we are really and essentially one in Christ, our common Lord and Master, whom we all strive to serve and to honour.

There is just one thing that separates us, and scarcely more than that; it is the wall of the Establishment. They believe in a State religion, and we do not. They belong to a Church supported by the State, and we belong to one that supports itself. This is the great *point* of distinction between us; a distinction

which we firmly believe will not last for ever. We should rejoice if they could clearly see their way to come out from this State connection, and shake themselves from the fetters with which they are tied and bound. We should rejoice to see them, like the noble Scotch, twenty years ago, casting themselves upon God and the sympathy of the British people. I say the British *people;* for were they to take the step here suggested, multitudes, no doubt, besides their own congregations, would rally round them and help them. The dissenters of every denomination, seeing them make such a stand for conscience' sake, would feel it their duty and happiness to assist them. Intimations of this kind have already been given, and we are quite sure they would be redeemed. Did they not help the seceders of the *North* in their noble struggle? Did they not open their pulpits, their hearts, and their pockets to them? And would they be less sympathising to their English brethren? I trow not. If they have any disposition to come out, let them put the dissenters to the test. Oh, what a memorable period in the history of our native land would this year be, if three or four thousand of the clergy were to withdraw, and

form a *Free Episcopal Church*, and boldly, and for ever, renounce all State patronage and control in matters of religion!

But, in reply to a suggestion like this, I fancy I hear some of these good men say, "We are not insensible to the evils that prevail in the bosom of the Established Church. We grievously mourn over her corruptions in doctrine and practice; and we frankly confess there are several expressions in the Prayer Book,—in the baptismal and other services,—which are not exactly to our mind. But we do hope to see a great reform. We do hope to see the Prayer Book *revised*, and such *discipline* exercised as will give a powerful check to the false doctrines and evil practices with which the Church is so seriously affected."

Yes, indeed, you may hope! You have hoped long; and one would almost imagine this "hope deferred" has nearly made your hearts sick. Luther saw the corruptions of *Rome*, and tried to remove them; with what success I need not tell you; but I venture to predict that your efforts, in trying to bring about any radical change in the Establishment, *are likely* to meet with the same results. You

have had meeting after meeting in relation to this object. Both clergy and laity have talked loudly and zealously about "Church Reform;" and one has proposed this thing and another proposed that. And, after all, what have you done? Did you meet with much encouragement? Did you find those in "high places" ready to co-operate with you? You know you did not; and, so far as appearances go, you are almost as far off as ever from realizing the object of your wishes.

But, suppose that by strenuous and persevering effort, by some mighty combination of the evangelical party in the Church, you could get a revision of the Prayer Book—some alteration in those formularies, the language of which cannot but be obnoxious to your feelings,—I say, suppose all this; and what then? What great reform would this accomplish? Such a change in the Church services might afford relief to those whose consciences have been more or less disturbed by the language as it now stands. But suppose you could turn the Prayer Book upside down and inside out, what great radical reform in the Church would you have effected? What crying evils in the Establishment would you have removed?

Suffer me to ask a few plain questions on this momentous subject. Would you have stayed the abuse of patronage, and made men more careful as to the persons they inducted into the ministry? Would you have put down that vile abomination — the public sale of livings? Would you have put an end to pluralities and non-residence? Would you have prevented the riches of the Church being lavished most outrageously upon a few individuals, while many of the clergy scarcely know how to live? Would you have prevented worldly men from getting into the ministry for filthy lucre's sake? Would you have prevented men from feasting on the revenues of the Church while they are propagating all kinds of dangerous and heretical opinions? These are serious questions; and it requires but little discrimination to perceive that any measure of Church reform, that leaves these gigantic evils unaffected and unremoved, would be little better than a mockery and an insult to the British public. And is there at present any ground for believing that these practical evils and abuses which have stealthily crept into the Church are likely to be removed, or materially mitigated? Is there any reason for supposing

that the bulk of our influential men are sufficiently alive to the magnitude of the evils even to *wish* for their removal? I presume not.

The plain matter of fact is just this: Men may talk and talk about "Reforming the Church," but so long as she remains entangled and incorporated with the State, it is all *an idle dream.* As well may they think of extinguishing the sun in the heavens, or arresting the waters of the ocean in their course, or removing Mount Etna into the midst of the sea, as to think of effecting any *great radical Reform* in the Episcopal Church, so long as she remains *in connection with the State.* It is this union, this direful, unsanctified, unscriptural union, that lies at the root and foundation of nearly all her corruptions in doctrine and practice. The union of Church and State gives birth to patronage, and patronage introduces a host of worldly-minded, unconverted men into the ministry; this prepares the way for the publication of the most false and erroneous doctrines, and for a multitude of practical evils, which no pen can describe, and no imagination can adequately conceive.

But it is cheering and encouraging to think

that this course of things cannot last very much longer. The separation of Church and State must and will come: it is clearly "looming in the distance." The signs of the times all point in that direction. All parties in the State, both political and religious, are, more or less, looking for it,—already it is the subject of nearly every newspaper and periodical; and, ere long, it will be the theme of every drawing-room, every social circle, every mechanics' institute, every lodging-house in the kingdom. The sounds of war are heard in the distance, and the hosts are preparing for the conflict. Men may strive to avert it, but it is morally certain the struggle will come, and it is equally certain on which side it will terminate. This question of the separation of Church and State is, strictly and properly, the *people's* question; and when the people of England have once entered on a conflict, they are not the men to give up: they have fought many hard battles of a moral kind in years gone by, and they will fight again when they have an object worthy of their energy and zeal. They fought hard for the "Reform Bill" in 1832, and they came off victorious; they fought hard for the "Abolition of Slavery in the West Indies," and they never

ceased till success crowned their efforts ; they fought hard for "Catholic Emancipation," for the "Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts," and especially for the "Abolition of the obnoxious Corn Laws." In no one of these instances, after the struggle had commenced, did they ever lay down their arms until they became triumphant. And when the grave and solemn question of a State Church comes before them, will they be less earnest about that? Will they allow the future historian of England to record it to their disgrace, that they were more energetic and persevering in what related to their temporal welfare, than in what concerned their eternal interests? I hope and trust not. And when that victory shall be achieved, as most assuredly it will, we may set it down as an indubitable fact, that it will be one of the brightest days that ever dawned on the British Isles.

The advantages which both ministers and people would derive from this separation would, I believe, be immensely great. It is not for me to attempt to describe those advantages just now; they may be briefly referred to before this treatise is closed. But it must be time and experience that can fully convince

men of the benefits that would result from the change. It is my deepest conviction, that such a change would speedily be followed by a *revived state of religion* in the Church; and that the blessing of God would come down upon her to an extent she has never yet realized. The clergy would feel at once relieved from all those restraints which ecclesiastical law has imposed upon them. They could go anywhere and everywhere proclaiming the "great salvation," and urging sinners "to flee from the wrath to come." And the people themselves would breathe a different air: they would be roused from their present apathy, would feel a new impulse stirring in their hearts, and be more deeply impressed with a sense of their responsibility to live and work for God.

Perhaps it will be rather expected that, in a work like this, I should make some remarks on "*Clerical Subscription*," more especially as the subject has recently engaged so much public attention; and I think they could not be more appropriately introduced than at the close of the present chapter. The observations I have to offer will be very brief.

If I understand what the papers have recently

said on this point, there are three parties in the Church at the present time, who take different views relative to the "declaration of assent and consent," as now required. One party would retain it as it is—these are High Church; another would modify it, or soften it down—these are Low Church; a third party would abolish it altogther—these are Broad Church. In my humble judgment, it scarcely signifies a straw whether it remains as it is, or it be altered, or it be entirely abolished; for every party will interpret the book, in the course of their ministry, according to their own particular views and sentiments. If the declaration were rescinded altogether, still, every clergyman, qualifying himself for service in the Church, pledges himself to *use* the book; his very act in taking orders implies his intention to use the Prayer Book, and to use it just as it is.

Very well; that's admitted. Now, then, suppose I am a young man, I have studied for the Church, and I desire to become a minister in that Church. Before seeking for ordination, I say to myself, "Now, Harry, you have a very weighty matter to decide. If you become an ordained clergyman, and enter upon the duties of the ministry, you will have to use a certain

book; you will have to use certain forms of words, contained in that book, in relation to baptism, confirmation, the burial service, etc.; can you stand up before God and the people, and use those words in their plain, natural, and grammatical sense? If you cannot, you ought seriously to pause and reflect before you go any farther." Were all young men, and all *godly* young men in particular, to press this question closely on themselves, before taking orders, I think not a few would shrink from such an engagement.

Now, to conclude. One word to those who are already in the Church, rather, I should say, to one party in the Church—the Evangelicals. Brethren, with all becoming deference and respect, suffer me to ask you, Can *you* be satisfied with an alteration in the *terms* of subscription, while the book itself remains as it is? Can you, with a perfectly clear conscience, stand up and use the forms of the Church service in their plain, natural, grammatical sense? 'Tis quite impossible; some of you have frankly acknowledged as much. I think, then, the path of duty is tolerably plain and clear before you. If you wish to remain *in* the Church, demand that those forms be *altered*, and that they be constructed more in accordance with

the sentiments you preach. If you do this, but fail at last, then, as it appears to me, you will have but one alternative, and that is,—to come out and assert your own freedom and independence. Should you have courage and resolution to take such a step, the prayers of the most godly portion of this land will follow you through all your future course, and we may venture to predict, the blessing of Heaven will more abundantly rest on all your future labours.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It will not for a moment be denied that some of the points discussed in this chapter, have been more or less adverted to in the preceding pages; but, from their great practical importance, the writer feels convinced that they deserve a more special notice. Great and mighty truths require to be told, not once or twice, but over and over again; more especially those we are slow and unwilling to learn. The observations now to be offered, will be arranged under several distinct heads or particulars.

First. *A summary of the evils resulting from the union of Church and State, and how to get rid of them.*

The evils resulting from this union may be briefly summed up as follows: It tempts worldly men to go into the ministry for filthy lucre's sake; this is a most *tremendous* evil, and the cause of almost every other. It is the most fertile source of *doctrinal errors* in the Church,

which are sure to be propagated by men who do not experimentally know the truth. It fosters all kinds of evil tempers and dispositions toward other sections of the Christian community; such as pride, enmity, bigotry, prejudice, a scornful and supercilious air, altogether opposed to the spirit of the gospel. It lies at the *root* of all the religious persecutions that have disgraced the Christian name, and stained the page of British history; but for that unhallowed union, persecution could not have existed. It keeps up a continual commotion in the country, by the extravagant opinions which opposite parties propagate, and by the lawsuits and contentions they so frequently engender; witness the *Oxford Tracts, Essays and Reviews,* Dr. Colenso's productions, and a host of things beside. Then, further, this union of Church and State is the *plague* of kings, cabinets, and parliaments, and consumes a vast amount of ime which ought to be devoted to secular objects. Session after session we have the subject of Church, Church, Church, till the public is weary and disgusted to hear it. It is the most powerful obstruction to all reasonable and just Reform; the State Church needs reforming herself so much, that she opposes all great

changes, lest she should have to pass through the same ordeal. It erects a wall of separation between those who ought to dwell together in the most perfect amity and friendship. And, to crown the whole, it constitutes the most formidable barrier to the propagation of pure and genuine Christianity throughout the land; yes, with my dying breath would I declare it, as the result of long and deep conviction, that the union of Church and State is the grand impediment to the spread of evangelical truth, and the increase of real, experimental religion!

These are some of the more glaring fruits and effects of the system, which are patent to every candid and reflecting man. Then comes the grave and serious question, When are we to get rid of the *cause* of all these things? When are we to get rid of the *union* of Church and State? that direful, prolific source of a thousand evils. Ye people of England, this question, this vital question, belongs to you, and it involves your dearest, your highest interests. As it belongs to you to settle *all* great questions, so it belongs to you to settle this. Remember, a *State* Church is a *Parliamentary* Church; and the power that made it can unmake it. The State can at any time

dissolve the connection. It can withdraw its patronage and support, and leave the Church to support herself, just as all other parties do. As a *State* Church, it lives only by *sufferance;* and that sufferance is not so much the will of the Parliament, as the will of the people. If the people of England, or the bulk of them, resolutely determine that this union of Church and State shall cease, the work is half done.

Just imagine that the great constituencies of England, before the next general election, had resolved to send no man to Parliament who would not solemnly pledge himself "to a *severance* of Church and State," what a consternation there would be among the candidates for parliamentary honours! How it would open their eyes! Men who could never see the baneful effects of the Church and State system before, would become the subjects of a sudden and marvellous conversion. I can readily suppose that, on the day of nomination, not a few of them would turn round to the electors, and address them in some such words as the following: "Gentlemen, we have been giving the subject of the Church and State union a calm and serious consideration, and we begin to see

that union, which aforetime we fondly thought was absolutely requisite for the good of the community, is really productive of many evils, and therefore, *nolens volens*, we are brought to the conclusion that there *must* be a separation of the secular and spiritual affairs of this kingdom."

That this great question will shortly come before Parliament, and be gravely discussed in the British House of Commons, no sane man can doubt. Nor can any one doubt that it will call forth a strong and powerful opposition. But what great question, involving the interests of the people, was ever carried without a struggle? We are quite sure most of the aristocracy will cling to the union of Church and State to the very last. When the discussion comes on, members will be found, in both Houses, who will affect a *mighty concern* for the interests of the working classes. They will eloquently expatiate on the spiritual *destitution* that would follow, in the *rural* districts in particular; and talk as if they were sure those districts, without a State Church, would go back to heathenism itself. And if they *did*, some of them would not have *far to go*, for they are almost in that condition now, with a *State* Church to help them. But we feel pretty

strongly persuaded that a large proportion of the intelligent and religious classes will have their eyes open to see that much of this talk about the poor is mere sham and pretence; and that many of the nobility and gentry of the land will be more concerned to keep up this Church and State connection because of the advantages it affords to themselves, than because of any special benefit it confers on the community at large.

Dissenters of England, a great deal will depend upon you in the coming struggle! Prepare yourselves for the conflict. Make yourselves thoroughly acquainted with the evils of the Church and State system, that you may know you are not fighting for a phantom. While contending for this separation, you entertain no unkind feelings, no antipathies whatever, against the *persons* composing the Established Church; your antipathies are wholly against her connection with the State. You believe that the Church of Christ (which embraces real Christians of all denominations) is a spiritual kingdom, and that no part or branch of His Church ought to be under the patronage and control of earthly rulers and potentates. You believe that the

Church of Christ ought to support and govern herself; that she did so for the first three hundred years; and that any violation of that law must be injurious to her best interests. In seeking that the Episcopal Church of this country may be severed from the State, you are not wishing to deprive her of any right or privilege that properly belongs to her,—you are simply seeking to place her on the only safe and scriptural foundation—the foundation on which all the other Churches in the land are built, and on which she will rejoice to be built herself in the future ages of the world.

Ye nonconformist legislators of Great Britain and Ireland, what a mighty work lies before *you!* a work demanding the consecration and employment of your noblest energies. In the conflict we are now contemplating, you will have to lead the van, and to stand in the front of the battle. You may be weak in numbers, but your *cause* is strong,—it is the cause of truth and righteousness. It is for no selfish end or sectarian purpose you will be called to labour and to fight, but for an object which involves the deepest interests of this great *nation*. Then, lift up your voice like a trumpet—*lift* it up! and be not afraid. Make it

be heard in the high places of the earth. With all the powers of logic and eloquence you can command, *protest* against this *monstrous, gigantic evil,* THE UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE. In doing this, you must expect a torrent of insult and abuse; but never mind that. I firmly believe that Heaven will applaud your motives, and future generations will call you blessed.

SECONDLY. *The separation of Church and State most beneficial to Churchmen themselves.*

It has been frequently asserted, that "dissenters wish for a separation for their own lucrative advantage; that they expect there would be a division of what is called 'Church property,' and that a portion of that would naturally fall to their lot." The reader may rest assured that this is one of the basest *calumnies* that was ever propagated by the tongue or pen of mortals; he may rest assured that such a thought was never cherished by them for a single moment. The dissenters know full well that all such property would be in the hands of Government; and, more than that, that their very principles would forbid them receiving it. They even gave up the *regium donum,* because they would not appear

to sanction the principle of State support for religion. That very fact ought to have prevented all parties from even suspecting anything of the kind referred to.

Then the question will be asked, "Why are they so anxious for the change? and why do they give themselves so much trouble about it?" Because they firmly believe that such a change would be for the unspeakable advantage of the Church, and for the spiritual benefit of the community at large. They know full well that the riches of the Church are the curse of the Church, and the curse of the nation; and that the withdrawal of these riches would, in the course of time, bring about a great and glorious change. They are fully persuaded that a separation of Church and State would produce a more efficient ministry,—a ministry distinguished for sound piety, evangelical truth, good preaching talents, and entire devotedness to God: and that could not fail to be productive of the most important and blessed consequences.

Let us suppose, for a moment, that all State support was withdrawn from the Episcopal Church, and that she was precisely in the same *position* as any other religious denomination;

the people now worshipping within her walls must have men to conduct their devotions, to preach the gospel to them, to administer the ordinances of Christ, and to watch over their religious interests. Of course they would feel, as other communities now feel towards their pastors, that they were bound to *support* the men who ministered to them in holy things. But mark another important change in their present position. They would have a powerful control over the pulpit—that is, they would have an influence, direct or indirect, in the appointment of their spiritual teacher. No man could be ordained over them without their consent. If, by some casualty, an improper person got into the sacred desk, they would very soon withdraw their offerings, if not themselves, altogether, and place themselves under the ministry of some one more worthy of their confidence, esteem, and support.

Who does not see that the Episcopal Church, severed from all State control, and left entirely to her own resources, would soon become a very different thing to what she is now? Who does not see that a revolution would be wrought in the ministry in the course of a few years? Who does not see that when men knew they

must stand or fall by their own merits, they would seriously pause before they resolved to devote themselves to such a calling? A thoughtful young man would say to himself, "My friends wish me to go into the Church—to be a clergyman; but am I *fit* for such an office? Am I really a religious man? And if so, have I *talents* for such a work? and do I feel that I could consecrate myself wholly to the discharge of ministerial duty? Unless I can satisfy myself on these points, I had better not even think of such an engagement; for, without these qualifications my race would soon be run."

Now, who does not see at once that, were men compelled to make such inquiries as these, for a man to resolve upon giving himself up to the ministry would be a very serious affair? When men knew that, without a thoroughly religious character, and real abilities for pulpit work, they could never get on, what a different class of men would be found in the clerical ranks to what we often see in the present day! And who are the parties to be benefitted by this change? are they not churchmen? Most undoubtedly. They would then have the gospel preached to them in all its purity and fulness; they would have men watching over them who

really cared for their souls—men who could sympathise with them in all their spiritual conflicts and temptations, and who would rejoice to lead them on in the pathway to glory and immortality.

Perhaps I may be told by churchmen, "We have many such men as you describe in our pulpits now—most faithful and devoted ministers of the gospel." Thanks be to God that you have; but you require a great many more. We want to see *all* your pulpits filled with such men—men who shall feel it their highest honour to live for Christ, and their highest happiness to bring lost, wandering sinners to Himself. We want to see the Episcopal Church of this land a healthy, vigorous and prosperous Church; and we want to see her connection with the State dissolved, because we feel assured that the union is the greatest *possible hindrance* to her purity and prosperity. You are offended with us now, because we tell you these things; yes, you count us your enemies, because we tell you the truth. But your eyes will get opened in time: facts, revealing the evils of the Church and State system, are helping to open them every day. We are fully persuaded you will

come round to our principles—we have only to wait. We say again, most advisedly, that *you* are the parties to be benefitted by the change, and not we; and, consequently, it is both your duty and interest to strive, in every legitimate way, to bring about that consummation so devoutly to be wished.

One of the most blessed effects that would result from a separation would be this—It would speedily bring thousands upon thousands of godly men in the Church into open and visible communion with the various sections of the dissenting community; so that, instead of the jarring and jangling we now have, we should soon behold the delightful spectacle of Episcopalians and other religious bodies mingling and working together in the most perfect harmony and concord. We have now what is called an "EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE;" but, after all, what is it but the mere shadow of a thing? Separate the Church from the State, and we should have such an evangelical alliance as the world has never be held—an alliance that might make the very gates of hell tremble!

The godly portion *in* the Church, and the godly portion *out of* the Church, are really one. They are but different branches of one

great family. Their modes of worship and forms of government may vary, but they are essentially one. They have one Lord, substantially one faith, and one spiritual baptism. They are all partakers of the same grace, and heirs of the same inheritance. Why, then, do they live so far apart? It is the Establishment system that forms the barrier; it is that which constitutes the wall of separation. Let the enlightened, godly portion in the Church cease to be connected with the State, and their visible union and communion with men of kindred minds and hearts would follow as a natural and inevitable consequence And would not such a sight do much to recommend the religion of Christ to a carnal and unbelieving world?

THIRDLY. *The separation of Church and State is absolutely necessary to put an end to the feuds and quarrels that exist within the bosom of the Church itself.*

Look at some of the discords that prevail at the present hour: High Church fighting against Low Church, and Broad Church quarrelling and disputing with both. One party contending about the articles, boldly affirming them to be Calvinistic; another flatly denying

it, and declaring that no such doctrine was intended to be taught. One party wishing for an alteration in the Prayer Book, another opposing all change whatever, and contending that it is the very climax of perfection as it is. The Puseyites strenuously pleading for the doctrines of baptismal regeneration, apostolic succession, priestly absolution, etc.; the Evangelicals denouncing these things *in toto*, and asserting them to be nothing more than the relics and figments of Popery. Oh, what a scene of strife, discord, and confusion does this Established Church present before the world at the present crisis! Nor is there the least prospect of anything like an agreement so long as the union lasts. So long as Church and State are linked together, we may expect to have strifes and contentions following each other in constant succession. There will be strifes in Parliament—strifes in convocation—strifes in the pulpit—strifes in public meetings—strifes in newspapers and pamphlets—strifes in courts of justice and the privy council; in fact, nothing but strifes and contentions from the beginning to the end of the year! Is it not time that something was done to put an end to *this fearful* state of things?

I fancy I hear a number of well-dispo reflecting churchmen exclaim, "But what put an end to it? that's the question." answer, most advisedly and emphatically, have done before—"*Nothing short of comp separation.*" Till that take place, wrangl had jangling, fighting and squabbling, will the order of the day. I confidently pre that there will be NO PEACE FOR ENGLAND LONG AS CHURCH AND STATE ARE BO TOGETHER. These words ought to be inscril in broad and legible characters, within walls of both Houses of Parliament, and on gates and doors of every place of worship in kingdom. Above all, let the sentiment deeply engraven on every Englishman's he and conscience, that he may think of it wl he lies down, and when he rises up, so that, due time, the whole nation may be roused demand the extinction of a system that is da engendering strife, bigotry, hypocrisy, preva cation, and almost every other evil, throu the length and breadth of the land.

It will be candidly admitted that even a *sepa tion* would not cure all the evils in the Churcl once. They have grown out of the system, a it will require a length of time thoroughly

eradicate them. The union of Church and State has brought a vast variety of conflicting elements together. The patronage system has introduced into the Church men of all creeds, and men of no creed; men of sterling piety and zeal, and men of no religion at all. It is the system that has brought these discordant elements together; and the consequence of this we now see in the strifes and discords which so fearfully prevail. The separation of Church and State would, in a while, introduce a new order of men into the ministry; or, more properly speaking, a much larger number of a certain order now existing—that is, men distinguished for genuine piety, sound views of gospel truth, and thoroughly devoted to the great work of saving souls: and just as this order of men prevailed, the false doctrines and contentions, that now afflict the Church would gradually die away.

I think we may take it pretty much for granted, that the Government and the Legislature must be getting very weary of the Church and State connection, or, at least, of the miserable fruits and consequences that spring from it; and they must see, more and more clearly every day, that there is no reasonable prospect

of any arrangement being come to, respecting either doctrine or discipline, that would give general satisfaction to the contending parties. Of one thing we may be certain—viz., that if they are not sick and tired already, they *will* be, and then something must be done. Under these circumstances, it would be no matter of surprise if the leader of the Government were to rise up some day in the House of Commons, and address the members to the following effect:—

"Gentlemen, we are so thoroughly wearied out with the everlasting and interminable debates in this House concerning the Established Church of these realms, and we also see, to our great grief, that the public mind is kept in such a state of ferment by the lawsuits and controversies that are incessantly going on, that we are determined, come what may, to put an end to these intolerable evils, by moving for a dissolution of the union of Church and State; the same to take place so soon as may be consistent with the just claims of all parties connected therewith. And we the more readily resolve upon this step, because we see that the voluntary principle has accomplished such mighty wonders in this land, and has taken such a firm hold of the affections of the people, that we are

fully persuaded Christianity may be safely left to the operation of that principle, and State patronage and control be withdrawn altogether."

FOURTHLY. *The Voluntary Principle is more powerful in defending the truth than the State Church.*

It has been repeatedly and exultingly affirmed, "That the Established Church of England was the great *bulwark* of Protestantism." It may please the pride and vanity of a certain class of persons to make this assertion, but it would mightily puzzle their heads to prove it. That she might have been so some generations back, we will not stop to dispute; but for any man to make such an assertion *now*, would be a proof of one or other of two things; either that he was profoundly ignorant of the subject, or that he wished to palm a delusion on the public mind.

Is it rational to suppose that a Church which is split into several contending parties, and preaching and publishing the most opposite doctrines, can be the bulwark of Protestantism? Is it rational to suppose that a Church which is widely disseminating some of the worst errors of Popery, and mimicking its follies and super-

stitions every Sabbath-day, can be the bulwark of Protestantism? Is it rational to suppose that a Church which has sent more converts to Rome five times over during the last thirty years, than all the other denominations together, can be the bulwark of Protestantism? The very supposition is a gross absurdity. With all possible seriousness I would say, God have mercy on poor England, if Protestantism had no stronger bulwark than our Established Church; for she would be in a most pitiable plight.

I go on to ask a few more questions on this weighty subject. If this country be saved from the ambitious grasp and tyranny of Rome (and saved, we believe, she will), will it be the Established Church that will save her? Will it be mainly by *her* prowess, in this great conflict, that the victory will be gained? Does Rome herself think the Established Church the great bulwark—the great safeguard of Protestantism? Rather, does she not laugh in her sleeve when she finds men talking in such a strain? Then, does Rome think that Protestantism *has* a bulwark—a real safeguard in England? Yes, indeed she does; she knows it, and knows it to her sorrow. Where, then, are the chief safeguards of England's Protestant-

ism? Where do you think, reader? Are they not to be found in the legions of Protestant non-conformists which are scattered over the land? The dissenters, oh, those despised dissenters, they are the chief safeguards of England's Protestantism; and Rome knows it. They are the plague and terror of Rome, her most powerful antagonists, and they will confront and battle her to the last.

Does any one ask for a proof of these assertions? Let him look at facts. Let him visit our principal dissenting places of worship—whether Presbyterian, Independent, Wesleyan, or Baptist,—and what will he find when he gets thither? What sort of doctrine will he hear enunciated from their pulpits? Will he either see anything or hear anything approximating to Rome there? Most assuredly not. In the first place he will see a plain, simple, scriptural form of worship; and then he will hear the great principles of Protestantism—the blessed principles of the Reformation—boldly and fearlessly maintained. When he has done this, let him turn to the Establishment, and what will he see and hear there? From some of the pulpits in the Established Church (and we trust not *a few*) he would hear sound Protestant princi-

ples advanced, and advocated with all possible simplicity and fidelity. But, in a vast number of cases, he would hear something very contrary to all this, as anti-Protestant as it could well be: Broad-Churchism, Puseyism, legalism; in fact, all sorts and shades of doctrines that can well be imagined. I say, then, that the voluntary principle is a more powerful defender of the truth, a greater safeguard to Protestantism, than the State Church; and that is the point I engaged to prove.

Whilst making these statements, we are not insensible to the important service which the English Church has rendered to the cause of truth in this land. We gratefully acknowledge that she has had many noble warriors in the field—men who have fought manfully in opposing Popery, infidelity, and every other form of evil. And we humbly trust that, in conjunction with other sections of the Christian community, she is destined to do a great work in maintaining Protestant ascendancy for the time to come. We know that she has great *power* for usefulness, and we trust that it will be wisely and vigorously put forth. We fully believe that she has many, among both her ministers and laymen, who feel a deep interest

in contending for the pure and genuine principles of the gospel; and we feel a strong confidence that, by the combined efforts of all parties, a noble stand will yet be made for the preservation of a sound and scriptural Protestantism, against all the aggressions of Rome and every other hostile power. But, whilst we feel persuaded that the Church can do much, even in her present state, we must declare our honest conviction that we think she would be likely to do a great deal more if she were released from the trammels and fetters with which she is tied and bound. If only the best men in the Church could be brought to see this themselves, what a happy day would be dawning on our native shores!

FIFTHLY. *A final appeal, both to churchmen and dissenters, on the separation of Church and State.*

Churchmen, with the utmost deference and respect, suffer me, in the first place, to say a few words to you. Permit me, with all possible seriousness, to ask you a few weighty questions. Where do you mean to take your stand, and what part do you mean to play, in the great struggle that lies before us? Do you wish to see the livings in the Church bought and *sold like* cattle in a market? do you wish to

see carnal, worldly-minded men rushing into the ministry for filthy lucre's sake? do you wish to see all kinds of false doctrines propagated in your pulpits, instead of the pure and evangelical doctrines of the Reformation? do you wish to see contending parties keeping up a perpetual ferment in the land: thereby drawing off the attention of the people from the great business of personal religion? do you wish to see the godly portion of your Church standing aloof from men of kindred minds and hearts, instead of seeing them united and working together for the advancement of a common cause? I ask, do you wish to see these monster evils perpetuated in the land? Of course, you do not; we take it for granted you do not. Perhaps you deplore them as much as we do. But, let me assure you of this, you are taking the most effectual *means* to perpetuate them so long as you are striving to preserve the connection of Church and State. These evils and others of a kindred nature, are the legitimate offspring of that most unhallowed union.

On the other hand: Do you wish to see your pulpits filled with enlightened, faithful, and devoted men? do you wish to hear your churches resound with pure, apostolic doctrine?

do you wish your worship to be kept plain and simple; exempted from the whims and fancies of Puseyism and Popery? do you wish your people to be kept from resting in a cold, lifeless, ceremonial kind of religion; and to be made to feel the life and power of true godliness in their hearts? do you wish to see Episcopalians and other sections of the Christian Church holding delightful fellowship, and striving together for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom? I say, do you in your hearts wish and pray for these things? Then seek, by all proper and legitimate means, a speedy and effectual separation of Church and State; for, as sure as we are living men, so long as that unnatural union shall continue, these blessed and glorious things can never be realized. But, only let Christianity once be set free from the fetters of State patronage and control, and let her be left to the voluntary support and government of her real friends and admirers, and she will soon unite all hands and hearts together. She will then march forth, with renewed energy and vigour, through the length and breadth of the land, scattering blessings as she goes; converting the wilderness into a fruitful field, and making the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Now one word to the dissenters, before we close. Nonconformists of Great Britain and Ireland, suffer the word of exhortation to be addressed to you. You occupy a proud position at the present moment, and a heavy responsibility lies upon you. Do not be ashamed of your principles; they are rising in public estimation every day, and they must continue to rise in every free country, and under every liberal administration. It is your privilege to maintain the *exclusive* authority of the sacred Scriptures, the *right* of private judgment in all matters of a religious nature; and, in connection with these, you fearlessly assert that the *voluntary principle* is the only principle by which the affairs of Christ's kingdom ought to be carried on in the world. These are your distinctive tenets, and they lie at the very antipodes of all National Church Establishments. As your principles rise in public esteem, those of an Establishment must sink into decay. In fact, men of very opposite views, both as to religion and politics, now admit that Church Establishments, as such, are doomed; that their continuance is merely a question of time. As for the Church of England, she is fast hastening her own dissolution. She is a kingdom divided against it-

self, and therefore cannot stand. The internal strifes and divisions that now rend her, are a certain presage of her downfall. They are sapping the very foundation of her existence, and destroying everything like public confidence and esteem. How long she may hold on, and maintain her position, amid all this battle and strife, no one would presume to predict. But this one thing we may venture to say, that thousands of her most zealous adherents must be anxiously waiting for something to be done that may restore tranquillity, and may constitute something like a basis for her future peace and prosperity.

Dissenters of England, let me say to you, in conclusion,—Don't be discouraged because of the greatness of the struggle in which you are engaged; only be true to your principles, and victory must crown your efforts. If this simple production shall do anything to attach you *more firmly* to those principles, and make you more anxious to disseminate them, the labours of the writer will not have been in vain: and should it commend itself to your judgment, as being adapted to enlighten the public mind, the author humbly trusts you will employ your influence in extending its circulation. By so

doing, you will be hastening on that long-anticipated period when all sections of the Christian Church shall dwell together in unity, and when the gospel of Christ shall go forth, conquering and to conquer, until the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

We have now told our tale about the State Church. We have said nothing but what we honestly believe to be true. We now stand at the bar of public opinion to be judged, and fearlessly await the verdict. That some will condemn we know. Well, let the advocates of State Churches now come forward in their own defence, if they have got anything to say. We challenge the whole Ecclesiastical Body of this kingdom to disprove the general facts and principles contained in this volume. That they might find some minor point or two to quibble and cavil about is very possible; but all such quibbling and cavilling would only betray the weakness and badness of their cause. If they have anything like solid and substantial argument to bring forward, by all means let them produce it; and then let the public judge between us. We are quite willing to stand the test.

AN APPENDIX;

CONTAINING A BRIEF OUTLINE OF NONCONFORMIST PRINCIPLES, AS OPPOSED TO THOSE OF A CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

IN a work like this, it would seem (as the writer thinks) not at all out of place to give an outline of Nonconformist principles; especially as it may fall into the hands of some who are very imperfectly acquainted with them.

Let the reader observe, then, there are two classes, or two general kinds of principles. One class we call *Doctrinal* principles, and the other class we designate *Church* principles. A very few remarks respecting the *first* of these must suffice at present; it is with the other we chiefly have to do. The doctrinal principles of the dissenters, or nonconformists, of this kingdom, are, for the most part, in harmony with the Articles of the Church of England. But, since churchmen differ so much in their exposition of those Articles, it may give the reader a more correct idea of them if we say, They are very

much in accordance with that section of the Church which is termed *Evangelical.* Those who are at all familiar with the preaching and writing of that party, can be at no loss to know what are the chief articles of faith, or doctrinal principles, entertained by the great body of English nonconformists. Those principles have been stated in former portions of this work, and on that account need not be reiterated at the present time. So great is the similarity between them, that I will venture to say, if a minister of the Church of England were to occupy a dissenting pulpit, and a dissenting minister a pulpit in the Establishment, and the people were told nothing about it, they would not know at the close but they had been hearing men of their own denomination.

Now we come to the other class of principles, designated *Church* principles. Every religious denomination must have a system of government, by which their general proceedings are regulated; and the principles involved in that system are called "*Church* principles." There are some differences on these points among the nonconformists of England, more especially between the Methodists and those who are usually

styled dissenters. I shall speak about the real dissenters first, and then a word or two about the others afterward.

The dissenters contend, not only for the exclusive authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice, and the right of private judgment in the interpretation of that sacred Book; but they contend that each church, or society, or congregation, or whatever it may be called, has the exclusive right to manage all its own affairs. Do not the ordinary secular institutions of our land act on this principle, whether it be a benevolent society, or a sick club, or a mechanics' institute, or anything else? They draw up their own rules and regulations, and they meet, from time to time, to transact business accordingly—no one presuming to interfere with them. So the dissenters contend that each separate community has this undoubted right of conducting its own affairs, independently of all foreign control. This right of each body of worshippers, to guide and govern its own concerns, is involved in the first principle of Protestantism. For if a man have a right to choose his own creed, and select his own place and form of worship, does it not follow, as a consequence, that the

individuals meeting in that place must have an exclusive right to conduct their own spiritual affairs? The dissenters contend that each church, or society, has the right to choose its own officers; to admit (or expel, if necessary,) its own members; to determine the exact mode of worship, and the times for conducting it; to arrange the plan for supporting the minister and meeting their incidental expenses; and so in relation to everything else. In most dissenting churches, the *officers* are of two kinds, ministers and deacons. The ministers have various names given them in the New Testament. They are called pastors, teachers, elders, shepherds, bishops, or overseers, as the word literally means. Dissenters contend that all these names refer to the same class of office-bearers in the Church. It is the business of ministers to conduct the worship, preach the Word, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, and superintend all the spiritual affairs of the Church. It is the special business of deacons to attend to the pecuniary claims of the minister, to take charge of the poor, and to look after all secular matters. Such is the constitution of a dissenting Church. How simple it is, and yet how complete!

Nothing superfluous, and nothing wanting. The Church principles of the nonconformist communities are few, simple, natural, and scriptural. There are thousands of these communities, or churches, in the land, hearing the pure gospel, enjoying all the privileges of Christian fellowship, and cheerfully bearing the expense by their weekly, monthly, or quarterly offerings. No State aid, and, of course, no control. All conducted on the voluntary principle.

Now I will say a word or two about the *Methodists;* but more about their religous operations than anything else. The reader will observe that the term *Methodists* includes several distinct bodies of people. First, the original body—the Wesleyans; then several branches springing from that stock: there is the New Connection; the Primitive Methodists, as they are called; and two or three other distinct communities. These several parties, taken unitedly, constitute a very large portion of the religious professors of this kingdom. Each of these separate bodies has a *Conference*, which meets annually in different parts of the country, when the general business of each society is *transacted*. Beside these annual gatherings,

they have quarterly district meetings, for the transaction of business relating to their several localities. The appointments of the ministers to their several stations are made by the Conference; the usual time allotted to them is two years, but it may be extended to a third year, if all parties wish it to be so. Those we should call officers in the Methodist Church, are ministers, trustees, stewards, and class-leaders. Each society is divided into classes, varying, perhaps, from six to twelve persons. These meet weekly, with their leader; and then give some statement relative to their religious experience, for their mutual comfort and edification. Such is a very faint sketch of the general constitution of the Methodist Societies in Great Britain and Ireland.

Now let us glance at their religious *operations*. As the writer is not connected with any branch of the Methodist Church, he may speak the more freely of them. I would say, then, and say it most heartily, This country is *greatly indebted* to Methodism. JOHN WESLEY, the founder of Methodism, was a man of extraordinary powers, raised up by God to do a great work; and he *did* a great work—there can be no question about it. He laid a foundation

deep and broad, and the building has been rising ever since. Perhaps it would be a more appropriate figure to say, He planted a tree, which has since grown to an enormous size. The old body—the Wesleyans—are the great trunk of that tree, and the other parties are the branches which have sprung out of it.

Methodism has carried the gospel through the length and breadth of the land; and, by its foreign operations, it is doing much to extend it through the world. It has lifted up its voice, not only in the busy town and the crowded city, but in the retired village and hamlet. It has penetrated the dark places of the earth, diffusing light and gladness in its course. It has, in many cases, turned the wilderness into a fruitful field; and made the moral desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose. As for the Methodist *local* preachers, their disinterested, untiring labours are beyond all praise; and other lay-preachers, of different parties, have followed in the track. How often have I seen them, through all weathers, hot and cold, wet and dry, sallying forth on the Sabbath morning to their destined stations; to walk *four, six,* eight, ten miles, and sometimes more, *to carry* the glad tidings of salvation to the

dark corners of the land. These are the sort of men, often despised by the world, whom God, at a future day, will delight to honour. Their record is on high; and the Master whom they serve will not forget their work of faith and labour of love. Let us individually try to catch more of their undying zeal; and, according to our ability and opportunity, live for Christ and His cause, so that, when our course is finished, we may hear Him say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

It is sometimes supposed that the Methodists, as a whole, are rather favourable, than otherwise, to a National Church Establishment. I believe there is a great deal of misconception on this subject. It is true that some of the ministers of the old Wesleyan body do sometimes, at an anniversary tea-meeting, or some public occasion, pass a kind of compliment on the Established Church. But I am strongly inclined to think that, after all, they care very little about it. Their object is to extend Methodism as fast as they can; to build as many chapels as their funds will allow; and to get them filled with people as quickly as pos-

sible. And if any should stray from the parish church into any of their sanctuaries, as doubtless they sometimes do, I do not think they will be the men to remonstrate with them on the propriety of going back again. Nor is there any reason in the world why they should; but I can give a very good reason why they should *not*. Because they know that if they take up their abode either in one of their chapels, or in almost any dissenting place of worship, they would be sure to hear the gospel; while, if they remained in the parish church, it would be quite a matter of uncertainty whether they heard it or not. I say again, their object is to extend Methodism; that is, to extend the gospel in connection with their own doctrines and discipline; and so long as they continue to maintain the grand essentials of Christianity, and labour to win souls to Christ, I, for one, will wish them God speed.

I go on to remark, that whatever may be the views and feelings of the Wesleyan ministers toward the Establishment, as such, I feel fully persuaded the great bulk of the people care but little about it. And why should they? What *advantage* do they derive from it? None whatever. They sometimes get insulted and abused,

and that is about all they do get. Well, then, with respect to the offshoots of Methodism—the branches from the old stock; these, as I have intimated before, constitute a very powerful and numerous body. And what are *their* ideas of a Church Establishment? Are they enamoured with it? are they attracted by it? are they anxious for its continuance? Do they consider that this State Church adds anything to the dignity, safety, happiness, and prosperity of the British empire? I believe not. If the question were put to them, I believe nine-tenths of them—ministers and people—would say, "Let the union of Church and State be dissolved; let the Episcopal Church be placed on the same foundation as others; let us have religious equality, and then we shall have done with fighting and squabbling, and live together in peace and harmony."

We are quite sure it must come to this at last, however hard and long me may fight against it. We are all born with equal rights; why, then, should one party be magnified and exalted, to the dishonour of the rest? There are two things we must and will contend for,—*religious liberty* and *religious equality*. Both these are the birthright of every living man.